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BRITAIN AND THE COMMON MARKET,
1955-1963

by

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A THESIS
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Britain and the Common Market, 1955-1963" submitted by Leslie Hurt in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Abstract

This thesis examines Britain's involvement with the European Economic Community from the latter's beginnings in the summer of 1955 to General De Gaulle's veto of Britain's application to join in the winter of 1963. Emphasis is placed upon the historical and domestic pressures under which the British statesmen had to operate when dealing with the European Community. The first chapter exposes the oft-heard, but nevertheless inaccurate explanation, that De Gaulle was the sole cause for the breakdown of the negotiations in January 1963. The second chapter outlines the historical background from 1945 to 1954 which helped to shape the British response to the European Community for the eight year period. The third chapter examines the reactions of the Conservative Government to the European initiative, while the fourth chapter is concerned with the Labour Opposition.

The fifth chapter analyzes the reactions of a limited section of the vocally critical British community, viz., the Liberal Party, The Times, and the Guardian, to Britain's involvement with the Common Market. The sixth and final chapter presents a summary and removes some of the misconceptions surrounding Britain's relationship with the European Economic Community from 1955 to 1963.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

> Those of us in Britain who oppose the Common Market don't want to subject ourselves to [a] lot of frogs and huns. (Viscount Hinchingbrooke, April 1962)[1]

> Glory, Glory Hallelujah! It's all over. Britain's Europe bid is dead. Now--Forward. (Daily Express, January 1963)[2]

> Unless you regard this country and the Commonwealth as sentimental relics to be decently mummified, the European association gives us far greater scope--particularly for help to Africa and Asia. But, as you say, we have to make it clear "that we believe in the ambition of a politically united Europe"--the most exciting new political concept of the last 30 years . . . . (Joe Grimond, August 1961)[3]

> Our history is a history of Europe, our defence is the defence of Europe, and our future and the future of Europe cannot be separated one from the other. (Duncan Sandys, October 1961)[4]

Looking over the range of arguments which were marshalled by the champions as well as the opponents of British entry into the European Economic Community, one is tempted to wonder whether the age-old question of Britain's Europeanness was merely being revived, or if in fact Britain was faced with an issue unprecedented during two millennia of history. The basic distrust of foreigners as exemplified in the rhetoric of the anti-Common Marketeers was certainly not original, for British statesmen had on numerous occasions in the past given vent to their xenophobia. Lord Derby, for instance, stated in 1876 that "One can trust none of these [European] governments,"[5] and it has been said of Stanley Baldwin that "He knew little of Europe, and disliked what he knew."[6] For those in Britain who regarded themselves as "European" in the sense of sharing and if necessary protecting a common intellectual and political heritage, the precedents had also been set. Gladstone's pleas for the victims of Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria during the latter part of the nineteenth century,[7] and British support for the Greek moderates in their struggle with the Communists from 1944 to 1946,[8] are but two of the many examples which could be cited.

Yet it would be misleading to think that simply because the rhetoric and the commitment to democratic institutions had not changed that the problem itself remained the same. Controversy had always surrounded the question of whether or not Britain was inextricably bound to Europe, but in the case of the Common Market the problem took in a new dimension: Never before had the people of the United Kingdom been confronted with the prospect of having to act on legislation not promulgated by their immediately elected representatives. The importance of this special condition cannot be overlooked. The consequences of an insular position and a maritime economy in the last analysis were the most important elements that had made for the uniqueness of British history, a uniqueness which had sunk deep into the consciousness of the British people and of which they were extremely proud. To surrender voluntarily any portion of the sovereignty they had struggled for centuries to maintain, even for a cause as worthy as the economic and political advancement of their own nation, was a move most citizens of the island kingdom had not so much as contemplated.

When it was seriously proposed that Britain should join the European Economic Community, debate, controversy, and at times impassioned rhetoric ensued against the background of shifting world power configurations. For there was far more to the question than merely the voluntary loss of sovereignty. Britain's role in world affairs following the Second World War was severely diminished. The historical fact that the holocaust had cost her £3,000,000,000[9] provides part of the explanation, but more important was the sudden ascendancy to super-power status of both the United States and the Soviet Union. The unparalleled spectacle of two non-European great powers,[10] aligned one against the other, undermined Britain's traditional role as a European stabilizer and made the old catchwords of "Balance of Power" meaningless. That Britain failed to perceive the steady contraction of her European power base, or even more unforgivably, failed to respond to an awareness of this contraction, is one of the focal points of this work. Rather than adapt her foreign policy to the rapidly changing realities of the modern world, she tenaciously clung to the mistaken belief that now, as during the height of the Empire, the pre-eminence of the United Kingdom in European, if not world affairs, was part of a natural providential order.

In retrospect, it seems all too clear that given the relative decline of Britain as a world power, active participation in the economic affairs of Europe was a necessary precondition for the maintenance of at least a modicum of influence in European affairs. The traditional response of British foreign policy during times of adversity might well have pointed the way to isolation or semi-isolation at this time,[11] but since the problem to be confronted was essentially unparalleled in the annals of British history, tradition would prove a poor signpost for the future. If the United Kingdom refused to participate in what had rightly been termed "the most exciting new political concept of the last 30 years," it appeared more than likely that she would continue to decline both politically and economically, in relation not only to the two superpowers, but to Western Europe as well.

Whether Britain liked it or not, the context and framework for decisions which most affected her development during the years 1955 to 1963 were increasingly continental. Those involved in coming to these decisions, however, had to balance external pressure against domestic desires and policies. As always, it would be simplistic to assume that either the Conservatives or Labour automatically took a "conservative" or a "socialist" stance. Thus, despite the acceptance of the benefits of a large capitalist market, and the expectation of an increase in trade which E.E.C. membership would bring, the Conservative Party did not come to a unanimous agreement on the desirability of British membership. Theoretically the Common Market issue ought also to have presented the Labour Party with an opportunity to join with other European socialist parties to combat one of socialism's arch enemies, the international corporation. However, in practice at least, two factors tempered Labour's support for integration. First, it was becoming apparent that the advantages which were accruing to Europe from economic co-operation served to widen the gap between the wealthier and developing nations. In addition, the tradition of British insularity reared its head in the Opposition as well as in the Government and produced arguments against entry which in many cases corresponded to those heard within the Conservative administration.

The gross imbalance between Britain's all too apparent decline in the years following World War Two, and her unwillingness to acknowledge that a political and economic union with the Community of the Six might possibly alleviate, if not solve some of her difficulties, is indeed one of the perplexing questions of twentieth century British foreign policy. A critical analysis of the historical background and the intricacies of the negotiations on British entry into the Common Market and of the response thereto, should help in elucidating why it was that the British acted in this manner.

Notes to Chapter One

[1] Daily Express, 26 April 1962.

[2] Ibid., 30 January 1963.

[3] The Guardian, 3 August 1961.

[4] Ibid., 24 October 1961.

[5] T. W. L. Newton, Lord Lyons--A Record of British Diplomacy (London: Thames Nelson and Sons, n.d.), p. 349.

[6] Winston S. Churchill, The Gathering Storm (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948), p. 221.

[7] Philip Magnus, Gladstone--A Biography (London: John Murray, 1954), pp. 242-243 and 589.

[8] A. J. P. Taylor, English History 1914-1945 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 589.

[9] Drew Middleton, The Supreme Choice--Britain and Europe (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), p. 42.

[10] For a recent analysis of whether or not Russia/Soviet Union is "European," see Elizabeth Beyerly, The Europecentric Historiography of Russia (The Hague: Mouton, 1973), p. 48.

[11] René Albrecht-Carrié points out that the nineteenth centry term "splendid isolation" is misleading if one takes it to mean a lack of interest in European and world affairs. It is accurate however, in the sense that more often than not Britain was content to let others fight her wars while she remained in the background and merely subsidized their efforts. One Europe--The Historical Background of European Unity (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1965), pp. 25-26.

CHAPTER TWO

The Historical Background 1945-1954

> Les nations d'Europe ont toutes les raisons de mettre fin à leurs guerres et de se fédérer. L'Europe, c'est une province du monde, et une guerre entre Européens est une guerre civile. (Napoleon)[1]

> The federated action of Europe, if we can maintain it, is our sole hope of escaping from the constant terror and calamity of war, the constant pressure of the burdens of an armed peace, which weigh down the spirits and darken the prospect of every nation in this part of the world. The Federation of Europe is the only hope we have. (Lord Salisbury, 1897)[2]

These astute comments, while certainly true of Europe in the nineteenth century, were equally if not more applicable to the Europe of 1945. Never had the consequences of war been so catastrophic as they had been following World War Two, and never had the politically conscious peoples of Europe been so vociferous in their opposition to the institution which many thought responsible for the current chaos, *viz*., the nation state. For the second time in less than half a century "the state had demanded everything from its citizens but failed totally to preserve their liberty, their property and their lives, save by accident."[3] As a viable political undertaking, it had proven itself inadequate, and those Europeans who envisaged "the revival of the glory of Europe"[4] justifiably demanded a change.

The continental wartime experience, however, was not completely mirrored in Great Britain. True, the British economy had undergone enormous strain and without American assistance would probably not have been able to resist Hitler's forces; but the country had never suffered the degradation of an imposed occupation, nor had it endured the demoralizing consequences of so much as a transitory military defeat on the home front. The fact that Britain, during her long and tortuous struggle against Hitler, had received relatively little effective assistance from other West European states, also coloured the British attitudes. It was American and Commonwealth succour, particularly the former, which had allowed the country to stand the tempests of war, and the British understandably felt that their future survival depended less on the traditional Continental allies than on the new and the proven overseas connections.[5] As a means of ensuring the survival of western civilization, the concept of an integrated Europe, therefore, had less appeal and was viewed with less urgency in Great Britain than in Europe. British sovereignty and political self-sufficiency had proven themselves in the past--albeit with a little help from well-meaning friends--and there was no reason to believe that they could not meet the challenges of the future just as effectively.

André Siegfried's description of Great Britain as "A ship moored in European waters, but always ready to sail away,"[6] was never more appropriate than after the Second World War. From the British point of view, the noble and magnanimous attitudes of the past thirty years--trim the sails and stand and fight--had been far too costly, the results in no way commensurate with the expenditures. With the winds of change again blowing strong, a careful re-examination of traditional policy was in order. This time, however, it seemed likely that the sails would be hoisted and the course set for either the United States, the Commonwealth, or if the winds were favourable, to both. The transoceanic link was for Britain the only visible means of maintaining her status as a world power. This she felt obliged to do, not only for her own benefit, but also in the interests of world peace and prosperity.

Despite the fact that "the European ideology"[7] was considerably less popular in Britain than on the Continent, the powers that be in Britain could ill-afford to ignore the growing pressures for European unity. Britain had always feared that Europe would unite for purposes inimical to her own,[8] and in order to stave off any untoward advances in this direction, it was necessary to maintain at least a modicum of interest in the vision that was sweeping Europe.

Post-war British interest in a unified Europe was stimulated by Winston Churchill's address at the University of Zurich on 19 September 1946.[9] The wartime Prime Minister, who in July of 1945 had been defeated by a seemingly ungrateful populace, stated that the establishment of "a kind of United States of Europe"[10] was the only possible solution to Europe's present difficulties. He went on to say that the first step in the creation of this new European family was necessarily a partnership between France and Germany; for without the moral leadership of these two great powers the animosities of the past would most certainly eclipse the vision of the future.[11] Britain's involvement in this integrative process however, was minimized: "Great Britain, the British Commonwealth of Nations, mighty America, and I trust Soviet Russia . . . must be the friends and sponsors of the new Europe and must champion its rights to live and shine."[12] The assumption here was that Great Britain was equal to the United States and the Soviet Union as a world power and, because of her Commonwealth connections and special relationship with the United States, could afford to sponsor, rather than participate in, the reconstruction of the shattered European economies.

Seen in retrospect, such attitudes appear rather over optimistic. As a percentage of the total British export and import trade, the Commonwealth share was to decline progressively from 1950 onwards.[13] And in the political sphere, the 1956 Suez crisis would prove yet again that the Commonwealth countries were not willing to defer unquestionably to British leadership. As for the special relationship with the United States of America, it too proved more myth than substance. The Americans were concerned with increasing their trade with Europe in general, and if forced to make a choice would most certainly elect to deal with a united Europe comprising five or six countries rather than with Britain alone. Whether or not the British knew it, the old special relationship was dead. It was gradually being replaced by the contract of an Atlantic Alliance, an alliance in which a united Western Europe was to be the predominant European power.[14]

The British policy of maintaining a distinct, though qualified interest in European integration was expressed succinctly by Churchill--still leader of the Conservative Opposition--at the 1948 Conservative Annual Conference:

> The first circle for us is naturally the British Commonwealth and Empire, with all that that comprises. Then there is also the English-speaking world in which we, Canada, and the other British Dominions and the United States play so important a part. And finally there is United Europe.[15]

In some ways this statement was nothing more than a reiteration of the position held in 1946, but beneath the rhetoric were discernible the beginnings of an entirely new pattern of thought. Whereas in 1946 the British held that European unity was the one and only solution to the problems which beset the Continent, by 1948 they considered it presumptuous to think that federalism was the final answer to European economic and political difficulties. In fact, the creation of a united Europe became the least important of Britain's foreign concerns.[16] For almost a generation after the Second World War Conservative and Labour statesmen alike were to exhibit an undue amount of caution and constraint when dealing with any aspect of European integration.

For the British Labour Party, the concept of European integration presented a particularly difficult problem.

Suddenly confronted, in July of 1945, with the prospect of abandoning British sovereignty in favour of the still unknown benefits of regional integration, the party had to reconcile its hesitancy with its seemingly habitual repudiation of "traditional British foreign policy."[17] Internationalism and the concomitant hatred of "the excessive fusion of nation and state power"[18] had been the basis for the party's foreign policy since 1914. Why then, in the years immediately following World War Two, did the Labour government not take advantage of the unparalleled opportunities offered for the implementation of this principle? There appear to have been at least three reasons.

First, prior to 1946, that is before the bi-polarization of the world became more and more obvious, Labour Party leaders generally adhered to the maxim "Left understands Left."[19] The problem as they saw it was not so much arresting by physical means the inevitable Russian revolutionary upswing, as the developing of peaceful channels of co-operation. As Denis Healey--Major in the British Army who was subsequently to become Secretary of the International Department of the Labour Party--noted at the time, "the crucial principle of our foreign policy should be to protect, assist, encourage and aid in every way the Local Revolution wherever it appears."[20] It was precisely this concept of the Socialist Brotherhood that prevented the Labour Government from participating in any regional grouping which might be considered a threat by the Soviet Union.[21]

Second, the Labour Government was concerned lest participation in a new supranational community result in Britain eventually being faced with a right-wing majority in any European parliament. Socialism was "an indispensable arm in democracy's battle against totalitarianism,"[22] and it could not be compromised by association with some of the right-centre governments on the Continent. As the Party's document on European Unity stated in 1950:

> No Socialist Party with the prospect of forming a government could accept a system by which important fields of national policy were surrendered to a supra-national European representative authority, since such an authority would have a permanent anti-Socialist majority and would arouse the hostility of European workers.[23]

Finally, the Labour Party was convinced that the Europeans themselves did not want, nor in fact were they ready for, a supra-national authority.[24] In part this was merely wishful thinking, but out of the cloud of phrases emerged the reality that the Party held a decidedly dim view of the democratic tradition on the Continent. For the past thirty or so years, the West European states had failed to achieve the democratic objectives of full employment, social justice, and economic stability. What reason was there to believe that the results of the next generation would be any different?

Clearly, the Labour Party's continental policy was as unimaginative and as oriented toward power politics as the traditional policy they had vociferously opposed for the past thirty-five years. They were no more concerned with building a new social democratic world "through unremitting struggle and International Labour and Socialist Unity,"[25] than were the Conservatives in resurrecting the glories of Britain's imperial past. The concept of European Unity was acceptable in the abstract, but never would the reality be allowed to interfere with British self-interest. True, there were a few party members who objected to the Government's non-committal conservatism,[26] but their objections were either ignored or prudently incorporated and subsequently lost in the evasive pronouncements of the Government. By 1948, the Labour Party had resolved that British sovereignty and the British way of life could not be sacrificed on the "doctrinal altar of a federal Western Europe."[27]

Organization for European Economic Co-operation

The negotiations which preceded the founding of the OEEC in April 1948, marked the beginning of the overt clash between the British intergovernmentalists--those who favoured European co-operation but only on condition that the ultimate decision rest with each individual nation--and the federalists and supra-nationalists on the Continent.[28] Neither was in disagreement with the objectives of the organization as enunciated by General Marshall--U.S. Secretary of State--in June 1947:

> It is evident that before the United States government can proceed much further to alleviate the situation and help start the European world on the way to recovery, there must be some agreement among the countries of Europe as to the requirements of the situation, and the part those countries themselves will take in order to give proper effect to whatever action might be undertaken by this government. . . . This is the business of the Europeans. The initiative must

> come from Europe. The role of this country should consist in friendly aid in drafting a European programme and of later support of such a programme, so far as it may be practical to do so. The programme should be a joint one agreed by a number, if not all, European nations.[29]

Rather, the dispute arose over the form the organization was to take. In the Committee of Economic Co-operation set up in July 1947 to draft a reply to Marshall's proposals, the British argued that an intergovernmental organization should be given the responsibility for the planning and execution of the recovery programme. The Council of Ministers, they maintained, must work on the basis of unanimity, with the ultimate decisions firmly under the control of the member governments. The French, on the other hand, favoured a more independent organization. Specifically, they wanted a strong executive body with some direct powers of its own.[30] Supranationalism--or at least a degree of supranationalism--was in their opinion, a viable alternative to the narrow-minded and parochial policies of the past. The enthusiasm with which they argued their case, however, was of no avail, for it was the British position which eventually triumphed. The OEEC Convention stated that decisions were to be taken "by mutual agreement of all members."[31]

Differences of view also arose over the American suggestion that a customs union be established as one element in the joint recovery programme. Mr. Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, was vehement in his opposition to the proposal. At the Trades Union Congress in September he pointed out that only twenty-five per cent of Britain's trade was with Europe,[32] the remainder going mostly to the Commonwealth and the United States. For Britain to associate herself with such a union would be tantamount to committing economic suicide. This apparent lack of concern for the plight of the European economy naturally aroused vociferous opposition from the Continental countries. Once again, however, the combination of British obstinacy and the need for immediate American aid resulted in the Europeans' objections being largely ignored. The Convention simply recorded that member countries "will continue the study of Customs Unions or analogous arrangements such as free trade areas."[33]

Unfortunately for Europe, the limitations imposed on the OEEC in April 1948, precluded the effective implementation of a co-ordinated European recovery programme. As an intergovernmental organization, it depended on the voluntary harmonization of national policies; and Great Britain was never reticent in pointing out that any policy that conflicted with her world-wide interests would be quickly vetoed in the Council of Ministers. Once Marshall aid was ended in 1952 and prosperity began to return to Europe, the organization became even less effective. With its raison d'être removed, the grouping became increasingly polarized; Britain pursuing one policy, the European countries, led by France, following another. As one incisive critic put it: "It was effective . . . when it handled crises and short-term problems. But its member governments did not encourage it to deal with deep-seated and continuing problems such as . . . general economic policies and planning."[34]

Anglo-Continental animosity was further increased in the winter of 1952-53, when Britain, the United States and the Commonwealth countries met to discuss the possibility of "progressively restoring convertibility to the pound sterling."[35] The Europeans, mindful of Britain's uncooperative record of the past, were naturally suspicious that the continental ramifications of the plan would once again be ignored. The fact that Britain agreed to discuss the matter within OEEC (Spring 1953), did little to dispel these fears, and throughout 1954 and 1955 the major work of the Organization centred on the elaboration of a European Monetary Agreement which would combine the British desire for freer world trade with Europe's wish to be recognized as a separate economic unit.[36] Not unexpectedly, the differences of approach which had been evident since 1948, prevented any immediate agreement. Despite the importance of the subject and the obvious economic interest in the convertibility issue, the dispute was not settled until the latter 1950s.

The convertibility dispute, however, was but symptomatic of a far deeper antipathy which pervaded the OEEC after 1954. By this time, France regarded the organization as "a British-dominated body,"[37] intent on pursuing British as opposed to Anglo-Continental policies. Likewise, the British looked upon the Continentals as being far too protectionist, more interested in protecting their own industries than in promoting world trade. Neither side viewed the OEEC as a foundation upon which a lasting European economic system might be built: "the British because they then saw no need for a distinctively European economic system once the post-war problems had been overcome; the Six because they had become pre-occupied with their own plans for 'making Europe'."[38]

The Council of Europe

Parallel with the developments in the economic and military fields--the OEEC and the Brussels Treaty of Western Union--ran a current of intellectual support for the idea of European unification. Originating with the German Romantics in the first half of the 19th century,[39] this particular stream of thought had been given concrete expression on 19 September 1946, when Churchill called for "a kind of United States of Europe." Support from other high-ranking statesmen, such as Edouard Herriot, former Premier of France, ensured the survival of the concept and in May 1948, delegates from various national movements for a united Europe met at The Hague to discuss the possibility of forming a European parliamentary authority.

From the opening negotiations, however, it was evident that the differences between the British and the Europeans as to the ultimate European objective would again bar any lasting and effective agreement. The Congress was further hampered by an internal dispute amongst the British themselves. The Conservatives, led by Churchill, argued that

Britain was historically part of Europe and hence was obliged to participate, "joined with her Empire and Commonwealth,"[40] in the proposed Council of Europe. The Labour Government, on the other hand, was extremely reluctant to take part in the negotiations. Three months before the discussions were to open, Attlee wrote to Churchill stating that it would be ill-advised of the Government to officially back the conference. On the eve of the Congress, the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party formally discouraged its Members of Parliament from attending.[41]

Such dissension within the British ranks temporarily allowed the Continentals, specifically the French, to gain the upper hand. When in October 1948, the ministerial council of the Western Union agreed to set up a committee on European unity, Herriot--then President of the French National Assembly--was named chairman. Notwithstanding his zeal for the cause of European unity, cynicism had become so engrained on both sides of the Channel that conditions soon returned to their customary state of paralysis. Hugh Dalton--head of the British delegation to the negotiations on the Council of Europe and a confidant of Bevin--was determined to dilute the ambitious pro-European policy of an unfettered Consultative Assembly whose members were not responsible to their individual governments. All he was willing to concede was a conference of delegations, each appointed by National Governments and led by a Minister, and each voting en bloc along national lines.[42]

In the end a compromise was reached: There would be both an intergovernmental Committee of Ministers and a Consultative Assembly. The former, a concession to the British, was to consist of ten nationally appointed Ministers, one from each of the member states.[43] While a complex voting procedure was laid down for the Committee, all but the most trivial matters were to be settled by unanimous vote. To placate the French, it was decided that the parliamentarians of the Consultative Assembly would not be obliged to divide along national lines.

In its final form then, the Council of Europe emerged as yet another regional organization entirely lacking in legislative and parliamentary rights. The Consultative Assembly was strictly an advisory body, and the Council of Ministers was so hampered by the unanimity rule that any recommendations made by the Assembly had little chance of being passed on to the member states. As an alibi for inaction, nothing could surpass the vague and non-committal aim of the Council of Europe: "to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realizing the ideals and principles which are their common heritage, and facilitating their economic and social progress."[44]

Bevin's success in making the Council of Europe politically quite harmless, however, did not preclude active British participation in the non-political endeavors of the organization. In matters of general European interest, Britain was perfectly willing to defer to the wishes of the continentals and as a result, the achievements of the Council in the educational, cultural and social fields were at times far-reaching.[45] But whatever the benefits of co-operation in the non-political field--and in view of the lamentable conditions in Europe at the time they certainly were significant--they wane in comparison with those that could have resulted had the members of the Council of Europe achieved the objective implied in the Statutes establishing their organization--the political unification of Western Europe. Where the British were at fault was in assuming that if the federalists' demands were met, all decisions would necessarily go against British interests. This type of self-delusion was not the sole preserve of the British Labour Party either. When the Conservatives returned to power in 1951, they refused to take Britain into the proposed European Defence Community. The splendid pro-European rhetoric of their opposition days was not to be translated into action once in power.

The European Coal and Steel Community

The behaviour of the British during the negotiations establishing both the OEEC and the Council of Europe had given rise to serious doubts concerning their intentions in Western Europe. They would join no organization which required other than a voluntary limitation of sovereignty, nor would they accept any interference with their extra-European connections. Furthermore, the British, through the use of their veto, sporadically paralyzed the Ministerial Councils of the two organizations, at the same time conducting a propaganda campaign against what they felt to be "a doctrinaire approach to a practical problem. . . ."[46]

Under these circumstances, and in light of the growing pressure by the federalists on the Continent, the West European governments from 1950 onward showed an ever increasing tendency to pursue a "little Europe"--Western European--as opposed to an Anglo-Continental policy. The first initiative came from the French. On 9 May 1950, the French Government proposed the fusion of the coal and steel production of France and Germany and any other European country which cared to participate. Part of the French statement read:

> World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it. The contribution which an organised and living Europe can bring to civilisation is indispensable to the maintenance of peaceful relations. . . . Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single, general plan. It will be built through concrete achievements, which first create a de facto solidarity. The gathering together of the nations of Europe required the elimination of the age-old opposition of France and Germany.
>
> With this aim in view, the French Government proposes to take action immediately on one limited but decisive point; the French Government proposes to place Franco-German production of coal and steel as a whole under a common higher authority, within the framework of an organisation open to the participation of the other countries of Europe.[47]

This French Government statement was received in London with mixed feelings. Bevin, who had known nothing of the plan prior to May 9, suspected a joint French-American plot to keep Britain in the dark as to European politics.[48]

Prime Minister Attlee, who spoke on the subject in the House of Commons on May 11, welcomed the rapprochement between Germany and the rest of Europe, but stressed that the far-reaching economic implications of the proposals would require "very careful study by His Majesty's Government and the other Governments concerned."[49] The period of "careful study" was to last three weeks, at the end of which Britain would reject the French invitation.

The major issue upon which the May negotiations floundered was the French insistence that "The Governments should be in agreement from the beginning on the principles and the essential undertakings defined in [their] document."[50] Convinced that nothing would be accomplished unless the negotiating powers at least agreed with the aims to be achieved, the French made acceptance of these terms a prerequisite for participation in the discussions.[51] The British, on the other hand, argued that to accept in advance the essential principles contained in the French communiqué would involve far too great a commitment to an as yet untested principle. In a communiqué sent to the French Government on June 2, they suggested a preliminary meeting of Ministers to examine the political and economic consequences of the French proposal.[52] Their diplomatic entreaties, however, were totally ineffectual, for the French refused to budge from their initial position. On June 3, the latter proposed to open negotiations with the five countries who had already signified their acceptance of the May 9 proposal--Germany, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Britain was to be kept informed, but was not to participate directly.[53]

In an accompanying communiqué, published on the same day, the British Government outlined its official position:

> His Majesty's Government do not feel able to accept in advance, nor do they wish to reject in advance, the principles underlying the French proposal. They consider that a detailed discussion, which would throw light on the nature of the scheme and its full political and economic consequences, is a normal and, indeed, essential preliminary to the conclusion of a treaty. . . . An unhappy situation would arise if, having bound themselves to certain principles without knowing how they would work out in practice, they were to find themselves, as a result of the discussion, compelled to withdraw from their undertaking.[54]

For the seventeen months that remained in Labour's term of office, Conservative critics were to attack viciously its failure to join in the ECSC negotiations. Harold Macmillan characterized the seven days preceding the June 3 announcement as "a black week for Britain; for the Empire; for Europe; and for the peace of the world."[55] Winston Churchill, who was more explicit in his criticism of Labour's behaviour, stated categorically on June 27 in the House of Commons that national sovereignty was not inviolable but could be resolutely diminished for the sake of world organization. Recalling the British struggle during the last war, the former Prime Minister argued that for the benefit of mankind in general Britain should once again be willing to run risks and make certain sacrifices.[56] Impassioned criticism on the part of the Conservative Party reached its apogee on 15 August 1950, when Harold Macmillan and David Eccles put forward the so-called "Macmillan-Eccles Plan" at the meeting of the Consultative Assembly in Strasbourg. Expressing a genuine desire to promote European co-operation, the scheme differed from the Schuman Plan in only two respects. First, there was to be a comprehensive right of veto. Second, the member countries could withdraw on giving twelve months notice.[57] In view of the distinct intergovernmental character of the proposal, it was eventually lost in committee; but its importance lies in the fact that it was put forward by Conservative rather than Labour members of Parliament. After the June 3 announcement, the latter refused to suggest an alternative proposal or to make known British conditions for future participation.[58]

There is no doubt that the Labour Government underestimated the political and economic importance of the ECSC. What is surprising is that once the Conservatives came to power in October 1951, they made no move to reverse their predecessor's decisions. When asked on November 20 what their policy toward the ECSC would be, they merely repeated--in many instances using exactly the same words--what the Labour Government had said in September 1951:

> It is because we recognise these responsibilities to Europe that we have reaffirmed the terms of the Washington Declaration of last September, . . . expressing Britain's desire "to establish the closest possible association with the European continental community at all stages of its development. . . . To this end, we shall discuss with the Governments concerned ways and means of associating ourselves with the Schuman Plan. . . ."[59]

By December 1954 the "closest possible association" had been transformed into a formal Treaty of Association. Involvement with the organization, however, was severely circumscribed. The British endorsed friendship and the desire for close association with the ECSC but refused to participate fully. The Conservatives felt, as had Labour in the late 1940s, that Britain was still a world power and that its world interests should not be sacrificed for the meager gains of a strictly continental relationship. "We believe, in common with the late Government," stated Anthony Nutting--Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs--"that our special position makes it impossible for us to become full members of any supranational body . . . we cannot surrender control over our coal and steel interests to any outside body or group. . . ."[60]

The European Defence Community and Western European Union

The years 1950 to 1955 highlighted in a dramatic fashion the problem of the defence of Western Europe. The "Maginot Line mentality"[61] which had resurfaced in the Western camp after the war was shattered by the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, and once again Europe faced the prospect of having to commit valuable resources to arrest totalitarianism. The magniloquent Winston Churchill was the first European statesman to react to what was then perceived as a distinct Soviet threat. Speaking to the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe on 11 August 1950, he called for "the immediate creation of a European army under a unified command, . . . in which we [the British] should bear a worthy and honourable part."[62] Hopes ran high in the European capitals--particularly in Paris, where on 24 October 1950, the French Prime Minister M. Pleven presented his plan for a European Army "under a single European political and military authority"[63] to the French National Assembly-- on the assumption that if and when the Conservatives came to power they would embrace the idea of a supranational authority and assiduously promote the Europeanization of the Continent. Such munificent behaviour, however, did not materialize. The Conservatives contented themselves, as their Labour predecessors had done before them, with a mere promise of close association. The Government's position was made perfectly clear when the Home Secretary, Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, spoke on the topic before the Strasbourg Council of Europe on 28 November 1951:

> His Majesty's Government warmly welcomes the initiative of the French Government in advancing this bold, imaginative plan [the Plevan Plan]. . . . If through it a new organization comes into being, we shall consider what is the best way for us to associate with this organization in a practical manner . . . I can, however, not promise you that our possible association with the European Defence Community will lead to complete and unqualified partnership; for, in our opinion, this . . . would have to be reserved to international discussion.[64]

The reservations expressed by the Home Secretary were taken up in March of 1952, when Anthony Eden--the Foreign Secretary--proposed that the Council of Europe be reorganized to serve as the highest authority of the Coal and Steel Community, the Defence Community, and future organizations of the kind there might be.[65] The proposal, which eventually became known as the "Eden Plan" was yet another in the long series of attempts by the British Government to reconcile European federalist thought with British functional convictions. As such it proved to be a failure. On 27 May 1952, the "Six" alone signed the Treaty which established the European Defence Community.

By the spring of 1952, however, Britain could no longer afford to completely ignore the supranationalist developments on the Continent. The Coal and Steel Community was by now an accomplished fact, and as a continental security group, the European Defence Community seemed assured of support. Much as they disliked the federalist aspects of the latter, Britain's own security dictated some formal link with the new defence system forming on the Continent. It is characteristic of Britain during this period that once the link had been given juridical form, it meant little or nothing as far as a commitment to European unification was concerned. The Treaty of Association, signed at the same time as the EDC Treaty on 27 May 1952, did not lead to British participation in the Community; it merely extended to the EDC members the pledge of military aid given in the Brussels Treaty of 1948.[66] As a further hedge, Eden also refused to allow the new Treaty to run for the fifty years of the Brussels Treaty. Rather, it was linked with Britain's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and hence subject to review after twenty years.[67]

Once the EDC Treaty and the Treaty of Assistance had been signed, British policy in Europe took a rather peculiar turn. Instead of avoiding involvement in continental affairs as they had done in the past, the British consciously sought to strengthen their relationship with the EDC. Two considerations appear to have caused this somewhat unexpected development. First, for purely military purposes a close association with the EDC was desirable. The Soviet Union was proving exceedingly obstinate over the question of German reunification, and if Britain refused to participate in the EDC the coercive powers of the Western camp would be that much weaker. Britain's position in the Middle East was also declining and as Lady Rhys Williams pointed out in a memorandum to Macmillan, it was "only by dominating Europe now that she [could] continue to appear sufficiently strong to command the respect of the rest of the world, . . ."[68] Second, it appeared unlikely that Paris, or for that matter Bonn, would ratify the EDC Treaty if Britain were not a member. The French could still recall their ignominious subjugation at the hands of Nazi Germany, and they feared that without a British military presence on the Continent, the Germans could easily reassert their former predominance.[69]

Whatever the reasons, Britain was slowly moving closer to the EDC. By 13 April 1954, the new relationship had been formalized by the signature of the "Agreement regarding Co-operation between the United Kingdom and the European Defence Community." The most conciliatory of all British undertakings with Europe thus far, the agreement called for the inclusion of British army and air-force units in EDC formations, and joint consultation with the EDC on matters of mutual concern. Moreover, in order to allay French fears that the duration of the agreement would detract from its effectiveness--twenty years as in the case of the 27 May 1952 Treaty--Britain also stated that she regarded the Atlantic Pact as of "indefinite duration" and was confident that an enduring relationship would develop between the member states.[70] Eden's comments in the House of Commons on 14 April 1954, testified to the seriousness with which the Government undertook its new commitments:

> The arrangements, made public today, complete the policy followed by successive British Governments. They fulfil the pledges contained in the Washington Communique of September 1951. Our intimate relations with our Western European neighbours, which found formal expression in the Treaties of Dunkirk and Brussels, are now extended and reinforced. To her old and new partners alike, the UK will be a loyal and resolute ally.[71]

Notwithstanding Britain's offer to maintain troops on the Continent for as long as there was a threat to West European security, the French National Assembly on 30 August 1954, rejected the EDC Treaty. The fundamental difficulty was again fear of Germany, but it was by no means the only consideration which prompted the French behaviour. The dilatory manner in which Britain committed herself to Europe was bound to arouse French suspicions. It had taken two years to formulate a policy which in the end still failed to merge Britain with the European military organization. Was there really any assurance that Britain would stand by her allies if by doing so her own security was threatened?

With the outright rejection by France of the EDC Treaty, the question of German sovereignty and rearmament reappeared. The British, who had always feared the resurrection of a German army independent of Western control, were quite naturally the first to suggest a substitute framework within which the latter could be allied to the West. The alternative system, as outlined by Eden at the end of September 1954, included the termination of the occupation regime in Germany and the restoration of her sovereignty; the admission of Germany to NATO; the transformation of the Brussels Treaty Organization into a Western European Union, with Canada, the United States, Italy, and the German Federal Republic as additional members; and a pledge on the part of the British to maintain four divisions and a tactical air force on the Continent.[72] These proposals were eventually embodied in a document known as the "Paris Agreements," signed in the French capital on 23 October 1954.

Judging from the Parliamentary debate which followed the signature of the "Paris Agreements" the WEU was viewed by Britain as nothing more than a temporary expedient designed to handle the German problem left unresolved by the EDC failure. Eden himself admitted that British forces would remain on the Continent only so long as they were necessary to make the deterrent against the Soviet Union effective.[73] Herbert Morrison, former Labour Foreign Minister, was even more blunt when he acknowledged that the only reason Britain accepted the WEU was because of its intimate connection with the Atlantic Alliance.[74] Britain had once again demonstrated its versatility in associating itself with Europe while at the same time assuming only minimal commitments. Obviously, Churchill's statement that Britain was "with" but not "of" Europe was still a valid description of both the assumptions and the conduct of British policy toward Europe.[75]

Notes to Chapter Two

[1] "The nations of Europe have all the reason to put an end to their wars and to federate. Europe is a province of the world and a war between Europeans is a civil war." Quoted by Count R. N. Coundenhove-Kalergi, Europe Must Unite, translated by Andrew McFadyean (Glarus: Paneuropa Editions Ltd. 1939), p. 3.

[2] A. L. Kennedy, Salisbury 1830-1903, Portrait of a Statesman (London: John Murray, 1953), p. 273.

[3] Hugh Thomas, Europe--The Radical Challenge (London: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 13.

[4] Harold Macmillan, Tides of Fortune 1945-1955 (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 153.

[5] Coral Bell, "The Diplomatic Meaning of 'Europe'," in Europe Without Britain. Six Studies of Britain's Application To Join The Common Market and Its Breakdown, ed. Coral Bell (Melbourne: F. W. Cheshire, 1963), p. 6.

[6] Quoted by Sydney H. Zebel, "Britain and West European Integration," Current History 40 (January 1961): 40.

[7] Jacques-René Rabier defined "the European ideology" as follows: ". . . the more or less coherent body of ideas and beliefs about the union of the peoples of Europe, and about the formation of an all-embracing society grouping together those nations which are called upon to take part in a new historic community." In "The European Idea and National Public Opinion," Government and Opposition 2 (April-July 1967): 444.

[8] Peter Thorneycroft, "The European Idea," Foreign Affairs 36 (April 1958): 473.

[9] It should be mentioned that during the war years several plans were formulated by the British which called for the union of Great Britain with the various West European allies: In June 1940, Winston Churchill suggested that Britain and France unite and form a single state, with a common parliament and common citizenship. In July 1944, Duff Cooper--British representative with the French National Committee in Algeria--proposed that Britain join with the other West European allies and form a closely integrated "Western Union." In light of the fact that neither these nor similar offers were renewed after the conclusion

of the war, it appears that the raison d'être for these proposals was political and military expediency rather than genuine sympathy for the concept of a united Europe. For a more detailed treatment of the British proposals see Robert J. Lieber, British Politics and European Unity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), p. 16; and Elisabeth Barker, Britain in a Divided Europe 1945-1970 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), pp. 18-21.

[10] Quoted by Ernest Bramsted, "The Six: Attitudes and Institutions, 1946-1963," in Bell, p. 46.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Quoted by Lieber, p. 17.

[13] Labour Party Research Department, Twelve Wasted Years (London, 1963), Tables 2 and 3, p. 324. In 1950 Commonwealth trade accounted for 48 per cent of exports and 42 per cent of imports. By 1962 the figures were to read 35.8 per cent and 37.2 per cent respectively.

[14] Richard Bailey, "America and the New Europe," in The New Europe (London: Conservative Political Centre, 1962), pp. 51-52. In December 1951, Senator Theodore F. Green--leader of a fourteen man team of American statesmen to Strasbourg in November 1951 to discuss the problems, prospects and progress of European unification--stated that the time had come for a reconsideration of Britain's Europeanness. His query centered on the funds made available under the Mutual Security Act of 1951, which were to be used for the production of the economic and political federation of Europe. The Senator argued that if Britain was unwilling to promote this objective--and he was of the opinion that she was unwilling--funds should no longer be made available to her. Peter Calvocoressi and Konstanze Isepp, Survey of International Relations 1951 (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 86-87.

[15] Winston S. Churchill, Europe Unite: Speeches, 1947 and 1948 (London: Cassel and Company Limited, 1950), pp. 417-418.

[16] Lieber, p. 18.

[17] Michael R. Gordon reduced "traditional British foreign policy" to three aspects: ". . . self-regarding promotion of national interests, defense of a far-flung imperial and commercial network, and management of a European balance as

a condition of British security--all backed, whenever necessary, by the application of force." Conflict and Consensus in Labour's Foreign Policy 1914-1965 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 1.

[18] Ibid., p. 14.

[19] Ibid., p. 90.

[20] Quoted in Ibid.

[21] Donald S. Rothchild, "British Labour and European Union," Social Research 23 (Spring 1956): 93.

[22] The Labour Party, European Unity, A Statement by the National Executive Committee (May 1950), p. 4.

[23] Ibid., p. 8.

[24] Ibid., pp. 6 and 13.

[25] Gordon, p. 87.

[26] In January 1948, G. D. H. Cole warned that unless Britain took the initiative in molding a "practicable West European union," the principles of social democracy would ultimately succumb to the capitalist philosophy of the United States. New Statesman (January 17, 1948), p. 44. On March 18, 1948, several socialist critics tabled a motion in the House of Commons urging the Government to proceed with all haste toward "a political union strong enough to save European democracy and the values of Western civilisation." Hansard, Vol. 448 (March 18, 1948), cols. 2302-3. Quoted in Gordon, p. 144.

[27] Labour Party Conference Report, 1948, pp. 177-79. Quoted in Gordon, p. 145.

[28] The Brussels Treaty Organisation (France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg), founded on March 17, 1948, was basically a military alliance. Although there was mention of collaboration in economic, social and cultural matters, there was no reference to either an economic or a political union. Documents agreed on by the Conference of Ministers held in Paris October 20-23, 1954 (Cmnd. 9304, HMSO, 1954), p. 32.

[29] Quoted in Barker, p. 76.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

[31] Anxious to safeguard the interests of smaller European nations, the Benelux countries also pressed for the unanimity rule. *Ibid*.

[32] *Ibid*.

[33] Organization for European Economic Cooperation, *A Decade of Co-operation* (Paris, April 1958). Quoted in Miriam Camps, *Britain and the European Community 1955-1963* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 7.

[34] Michael Palmer and John Lambert, *European Unity--A survey of the European Organisations* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1968), p. 110.

[35] Camps, p. 9.

[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

[37] Barker, p. 80.

[38] Camps, p. 10.

[39] See for example Friedrich von Hardenberg, "Die Christenheit oder Europa," in *Werke*, ed. Ewald Wasmuth, Vol. 1 (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1953), pp. 277-304.

[40] Quoted in Barker, p. 83.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

[42] Bramsted, p. 48.

[43] The Statutes of the Council of Europe were originally signed by the Five Brussels Treaty Powers, plus Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Ireland.

[44] Quoted in Barker, p. 84.

[45] Of particular importance was the implementation of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Basic Freedoms, signed in Rome in November 1950. Binding on all member states, the Strasbourg Convention provides legal

guarantees of the rights in question. These guarantees are enforced by a Commission of Human Rights and a Court of Human Rights empowered to make a friendly settlement of complaints without the necessity of a unanimous vote. Bramsted, p. 51.

[46] Barker, p. 85.

[47] *Anglo-French Discussions regarding French proposals for the Western European Coal, Iron and Steel Industries* (Cmnd. 7970, HMSO, 1950), p. 4.

[48] On May 7, the American Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, had been informed by Robert Schuman--French Foreign Minister--of the proposed coal and steel community. When the former travelled to London later that week, he did not tell Bevin that he knew of the plan until after the official French announcement. Barker, p. 86.

[49] Cmnd. 7970, p. 5.

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[51] The following draft communiqué was attached to the French Memorandum of June 1:

> The Governments of . . . in their determination to pursue a common action for peace, European solidarity and economic and social progress have assigned to themselves as their immediate objective the pooling of coal and steel production and the institution of a new authority whose decision will bind. . . .
>
> Negotiations, on the basis of the French proposal of 9th May last, will open at a date which will be proposed almost at once by the French Government with the view to working out the terms of a treaty which will be submitted for ratification to the respective Parliaments. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[55] Macmillan, pp. 191-192.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 199.

[57] Hans Joachim Heiser, British Politics With Regard to Unification Efforts on the European Continent (Leyden: A. W. Sythoff, 1959), pp. 41-42; and Macmillan, pp. 202-203.

[58] Hansard, Vol. 476 (June 13, 1950), cols. 37 and 46.

[59] Hansard, Vol. 494 (November 20, 1951), col. 237. The statement issued by the Foreign Ministers of Great Britain, France and the United States on September 14, 1951 (Washington Declaration) read as follows: "The Three Ministers recognise that the initiative taken by the French Government, concerning the creation of a European coal and steel community and a European defence community, is a major step towards European unity. They welcome the Schuman Plan as a means of strengthening the economy of Western Europe and look forward to its early realisation. . . . The Government of the United Kingdom desires to establish the closest possible association with the European Continental Community at all stages in its development." Heiser, p. 45.

[60] Hansard, Vol. 537 (February 21, 1955), cols. 941 et seq.

[61] Willy Brandt, "The Division of Europe," in Hugh Gaitskell 1906-1963, ed. W. T. Rodgers (London: Thames and Hudson, 1964), p. 135.

[62] Quoted in Macmillan, p. 217.

[63] European Community (June 1967), p. 4. Quoted in Lieber, p. 23.

[64] Council of Europe, Consultative Assembly, Official Report, 3rd Session, 1951, p. 514.

[65] For a more detailed treatment of the "Eden Plan" see Anthony Eden, The Memoirs of the RT. Hon. Sir Anthony Eden--Full Circle (London: Cassell, 1960), p. 48.

[66] Heiser, pp. 60 and 65. For members of the Brussels Treaty Organization see note 28.

[67] Barker, p. 112.

[68] Quoted in Macmillan, p. 476.

[69] According to the Brussels Treaty of 1948, to which France still adhered, member countries agreed "to take such

steps as may be necessary in the event of renewal by Germany of a policy of aggression." Cmnd. 9304, p. 33.

[70] Heiser, p. 66 and Barker, p. 115.

[71] _Hansard_, Vol. 526 (April 14, 1954), col. 1143.

[72] Heiser, pp. 68-69 and Camps, p. 17.

[73] _Hansard_, Vol. 533 (November 17, 1954), cols. 398 _et seq_.

[74] _Ibid._, cols. 416 _et seq_.

[75] _Hansard_, Vol. 515 (May 11, 1953), cols. 891-892.

CHAPTER THREE

The Conservative Government, 1955-1963

On 29 September 1954, in the midst of the discussions which would bring the Federal Republic of Germany into NATO, Eden observed that British history was "above all an island story." "We are," he maintained, "still an island people in thought and tradition."[1] For a Conservative statesman to verbalize in front of a predominantly European audience what until then had been merely an assumed position and one which was regretted by the federalists and supranationalists on the Continent, was indicative of the attitude the Conservative Party was to take towards Europe in the period 1955 to 1963. The motives underlying the Conservatives' behaviour were, once again, fear of continental entanglement and the desire to maintain a world-wide rather than a strictly continental economy.[2] In part, this was the result of a long divergence of mind and methods of argumentation between the Continentals and the British. The former liked to reason *a priori*, that is from the general to the practical. The latter on the other hand, preferred to argue *a posteriori*, from the bottom upwards, from the practical to the general.[3] Britain's refusal to join the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 illustrated this tendency to decline participation in any organization which involved a prior commitment to a new and unproven principle. But far more important than temperamental and intellectual differences was the scepticism with which the British viewed the continental efforts at supranationalism and federalism. Despite the fact that the fiasco of the European Defence Community was caused, at least in part, by Britain's refusal to sign the 1952 Treaty, the British still thought of themselves as superior to the apparently inefficient Continentals. The success of Eden's rescue operation in creating the Western European Union in October 1954, served to reinforce this feeling of superiority.[4]

From 1955 until 1963 then, the British Government looked upon the Europeans as hopeless idealists, bent on pursuing an objective which while admirable in the abstract, was anything but practicable when confronted by reality. This British smugness about their own realism and common sense with regard to European affairs was not to be shattered until January 1963, when General de Gaulle vetoed Britain's application to join the European Economic Community. Unfortunately for the British, the destruction of this self-styled myth of international importance came about far too late. By 1963, France had firmly grasped the leadership in European affairs; relegating the "island people" to a more or less peripheral position. Eight years of vacillation, augmented in many instances by what with the benefit of hindsight appear to have been unreasonable demands, had finally taken their toll. The British nation, with both its real and mythological influence, was now only one of many second-rate world powers struggling to maintain itself in face of the growing ascendency of the United States and the Soviet Union.

In June 1955, the Conservative Government of Great Britain was confronted with a "European" decision which in retrospect marked the turning point in the history of European integration. Meeting at Messina on June 1 and 2, the Foreign Ministers of the six ECSC nations adopted a resolution which called for the economic as well as the political unification of Western Europe. In a spirit of firm optimism, the signatory powers called for multilateral economic co-operation and integration as the basis for a united Europe:

> The Governments of the Federal German Republic, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands believe that the time has come to make a fresh advance towards the building of Europe. They are of the opinion that this must be achieved, first of all, in the economic field.
>
> They consider that it is necessary to work for the establishment of a united Europe by the development of common institutions, the progressive fusion of national economics, the creation of a common market and the progressive harmonisation of their social policies.
>
> Such a policy seems to them indispensable if Europe is to maintain her position in the world, regain her influence and prestige and achieve a continuing increase in the standard of living of her population.[5]

The central concept of the Messina decisions was a shift in emphasis from bilateral arrangements, such as the Franco-German rapprochement of May 1955,[6] to a multi-lateral approach to European social, economic and political difficulties. Unlike the O.E.E.C. and the Council of Europe, which because of the unanimity rules enforced in their Ministerial Councils implicitly encouraged bilateral agreements, the proposed European Economic Community was to be administered by a supranational organization entrusted with the responsibility and means for ensuring the successful development of a united Europe. The six governments represented at Messina were also anxious that the United Kingdom, a member of the W.E.U. and an associated member of the E.C.S.C., be represented in the new European venture.[7] To this end, on June 30, Monsieur J. W. Beyen--Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Netherlands and Chairman of the six Messina Ministers--extended a formal invitation to the Government of Great Britain "to participate in the studies to be undertaken by the committee of Government representatives"[8] in pursuance of the June Resolution.[9]

As in the previous ten years, the British response to this new European invitation was characterized by circumspection and reserve. In a formal letter dated July 1, Harold Macmillan--British Foreign Secretary--indicated that the Conservative Government would participate in the committee's work only on the understanding that the views of the different countries affected be heard. The Government was particularly concerned lest the functions of the existing organizations such as the O.E.E.C. be ignored and work duplicated unnecessarily. Macmillan's reply then continued:

> There are, as you are no doubt aware, special difficulties for this country in any proposal for "a European common market." They [the Conservative Government] will be happy to examine, without prior commitment and on their merits, the

> many problems which are likely to emerge from the studies and in doing so will be guided by the hope of reaching solutions which are in the best interest of all parties concerned.[10]

In fact, once the Spaak Committee began its extensive work in July 1955, it quickly became evident that Great Britain was anything but concerned with amplifying or implementing the Messina proposals. Mr. Bretherton--the Under-Secretary of state from the Board of Trade--who participated on behalf of the United Kingdom was not a "delegate," as were the participants from the six E.C.S.C. countries, but merely a "representative."[11] Reminiscent of British behaviour prior to the E.C.S.C. negotiations, the designation implied that the Government had not committed itself to the Messina Resolution but would reserve its decision pending the outcome of the discussions.

Fundamental differences between the United Kingdom and the Six also arose in the four committees of experts struck to assist the steering group chaired by M. Spaak. The two most contentious issues were the British desire to constitute a free trade area rather than a customs union and the British feeling that no new machinery outside the existing O.E.E.C. framework need be established for the successful implementation of the Messina proposals.[12] The conspicuous absence of Mr. Macmillan from a Foreign Ministers' conference held in early September to review the progress of the committees to that point, suggested that the British Government was hardly amenable to a compromise solution to these difficult problems, let alone willing to defer to the will of the majority. Mr. Macmillan's letter to R. A. Butler--the then Chancellor of the Exchequer--on 23 October 1955, was perhaps most expressive of official British opinion at the time. In reference to the committee struck by the Messina conference to study the possibility of setting up a general common market, the Foreign Secretary stated that while the Government was certainly not anxious to withdraw from the discussions, it was fully cognizant of the danger of being drawn into a European Customs Union, specifically with regard to Commonwealth relations.[13]

The controversy between the British and the Six over the issue of the Messina objectives eventually came to a head on 7 November 1955, when the British representative withdrew from the Spaak Committee. In accordance with the previous British stance, Mr. Bretherton's final remarks emphasized the fact that the British Government would take no position on the Common Market issue until all the details were known. Furthermore, he reiterated that duplication must be avoided between the organization charged with the implementation of the Messina programs and other organizations already existing in Europe, specifically the O.E.E.C. As a rejoinder to the Belgian accusation that Britain showed a marked tendency to admit only one form of co-operation, viz., intergovernmental, Mr. Bretherton pointed out that his remarks represented merely the initial reaction of the British Government and that the administration had every intention of studying the problem further.[14] The Six, however, were not deterred by Britain's all too apparent refusal to so much as discuss the issue of British association with the proposed customs union. On the same day that Britain withdrew from the steering committee, M. Spaak announced that since the next stage of the negotiations would involve a political commitment to the Messina Resolution, participation would necessarily be limited to the Six.[15]

In addition to the aforementioned objections to participation in the E.E.C., there appear to have been at least four adjunctive reasons for the British withdrawal. First, due to its experience during the Second World War,[16] Britain did not feel compelled to abandon old and trusted institutions and adhere to the supranationalist formula espoused by the Six. The British nation as a whole had never understood the European desire for real unity, and those most critical had gone so far as to characterize the one attempt thus far--the E.C.S.C.--as "a cross between a frustrated cartel and a pipedream."[17] Second, until the very end of 1955, the British Government regarded the Common Market question as economic and commercial not political. The way responsibility for the Brussels negotiations was assigned attested to this fact: The Six were represented by their respective Foreign Ministers, whereas the British "representative" was appointed from the Board of Trade. The loss of sovereignty was not of course disregarded, but it was incorporated in the generally accepted axiom that Britain should not under any circumstances join a supranational organization. Third, in 1955 many British statesmen involved in foreign policy formulation still looked favourably on Anglo-American co-operation. The doctrine of a "special relationship" with the American giant had not yet been shattered by the Suez crisis, and it was commonly held that this link, along with the Commonwealth connection, was sufficient to maintain Britain's status as a world power.[18] And finally, by virtue of its pre-eminence in the field of European nuclear research, Britain was opposed to participation in Euratom.[19] Unlike the six Messina powers, the United Kingdom had an assured source of uranium--Canada--and because of its Commonwealth connections a fairly sizable and stable market for its nuclear products, i.e., reactors. There were also various complications arising from the fact that Britain had developed its nuclear energy for peaceful as well as military purposes, and in this connection had signed a number of agreements with the United States--for example the June 1955 accord to co-operate in the peaceful use of nuclear weapons.[20]

Despite the obvious British aversion to the recent developments on the Continent, by early 1956 it had become all but impossible for the Conservative Government not to respond to them. By this time it had become quite clear that the Six would proceed with their plans regardless of Britain's opposition, and support from high-ranking American statesmen, such as Secretary of State John Foster Dulles,[21] practically assured the plan's success. The first sign of a renewed, albeit reluctant, British interest in the proceedings of the Brussels Conference came in the House of Commons on 5 July 1956, when Conservative M.P. Sir Robert Boothby stated that Western Europe could not hope to survive as a distinct economic entity unless Britain took the lead.[22] Indicative of a general reappraisal of European policy on the part of the Conservative Government as a whole, his remarks were quickly enlarged on by Sir Edward Boyle--Economic Secretary to the Treasury--who took great pains to point out that the Government had not closed its mind on the subject of the Common Market. He advanced the argument that the reluctance of the British to associate themselves too closely with Europe was expressive of a genuine desire not to be accused of bad faith if at some time in the future they were forced to withdraw. Finally, Sir Edward emphasized that the Government was fully cognizant of the importance of the decision.

> We fully realize that there is a major policy decision to be made here. We are completely open-minded and will be guided solely by what we conceive to be the proper harmony of the interests of Britain, the interests of the Commonwealth, the interests of Europe and of the free world as a whole.[23]

The interest in European affairs as expressed by Conservative party members the likes of Boothby and Boyle, emerged later that month in a British suggestion that a European Free Trade Area be established among all O.E.E.C. countries, but within which the Common Market powers would constitute an entity of their own. The British proposal, which because of its strictly economic implications was presented to the Council of the O.E.E.C. under the guise of a joint European initiative (the so-called "Sergent Plan," R. E. Sergent being the Secretary-General of the O.E.E.C.), quickly proved acceptable. By 21 July 1956, "Working Party No. 17" had been set up within the Council to study the possibility of creating a Free Trade Area with the customs union.[24]

To the uninitiated, Britain's advocacy of a Free Trade Area appeared quite naturally as a genuine decision in favour of close Anglo-Continental co-operation. No longer was the Conservative Government to oscillate between the Commonwealth, the United States and Europe, for it had finally come to the conclusion that a strengthening of the British economy could only be realized through a closer association with the Six. In reality, however, such was not the case, for as the old saw would have it, Britain wished to have its cake and eat it too. The plan for a Free Trade Area was attractive to Britain precisely because it left her free to negotiate with the Six, while at the same time preserving her preferential system of trade with the Commonwealth. Her apparent change in attitude was due solely to the Continental initiative with regard to the European Common Market; she would continue the negotiations only so long as the organization was seen as a permanent institution. In the House of Commons debate which followed the formal British Cabinet decision to open negotiations with the O.E.E.C., Mr. Macmillan--then Chancellor of the Exchequer--set out clearly the

Government's position with regard to a customs union:

> I do not believe that this House would ever agree to our entering arrangements which, as a matter of principle, would prevent our treating the great range of imports from the Commonwealth at least as favourable as those from the European countries. . . . I think we are all agreed there. I feel sure that the Governments of the countries who are negotiating their Customs union in Brussels understand and appreciate our position in this matter. So that is out.[25]

Despite the fact that Macmillan's speech betrayed the misguided impulse which underlay Britain's advocacy of the Free Trade Area, viz., "not so much to back up Europe and get its backing, as to back into it,"[26] the O.E.E.C. working party continued its deliberations and in January 1957 confirmed the technical possibility of creating a Free Trade Area which include the Customs Union envisaged by the Messina powers.[27] The optimistic tenor of the report must have been partially due to the support given the Free Trade Area concept by the various unions and industrial organizations important in Tory party counsels. The Federation of British Industries, upon which the Government relied for assistance in formulating and in some cases administering policies of interest to British manufacturers,[28] for one had declared its support for the FTA as early as September 1956.[29] Later the same year, The National Farmers' Union also proclaimed a "complete identity of view on this question between HMG and [itself]."[30] With such powerful forces within the Conservative machine openly advocating British membership in a Free Trade Area, surely the Europeans of the O.E.E.C. were justified in assuming that the Government would approach the scheme with the political will necessary to make it work.

The evident determination of British industry and agriculture to associate with the Continent in a Free Trade Area, had an equally heartening effect on the Conservative Government--which as of January 10 was headed by Harold Macmillan. On 13 February 1957, it submitted to the O.E.E.C. Council a memorandum setting out its views on a European Free Trade Area. As expected, the report merely confirmed what had already been widely known in informed European circles, namely, that Her Majesty's Government envisaged free trade "as a concept related primarily to the removal of restriction on trade such as tariffs and quotas."[31] Its importance, however, lay in the fact that since it represented both an outline scheme and a statement of British policy, it tended to label the Free Trade Area as a "British" rather than a "European" plan.[32] Understandably, the representatives of the six Messina powers who were meeting at Brussels to iron out the few remaining difficulties of the Customs Union, interpreted this move as a British bid to wreck their own ambitious plans for Europe and have them replaced by a much more modest enterprise which offered little or no prospect of a European political union. The natural corollary to this very discerning interpretation of British behaviour was a hardened resolve to bring the Brussels negotiations to a successful conclusion as soon as possible.[33]

Yet another tactical error on the part of the Conservative Government was to sanction the "Grand Design" of Foreign

Minister Selwyn Lloyd. This plan, which was outlined to a Ministerial Council meeting of NATO in December 1956, and subsequently "leaked" to the press, called for the streamlining of all European and Atlantic regional parliamentary bodies. No longer were NATO, the Council of Europe, W.E.U., and the European Coal and Steel Community to function as independent bodies. Rather, they were to be subsumed under a "General Assembly of Parliamentarians" which would operate on an inter-governmental basis similar to that of the O.E.E.C.[34] The proposals of course provoked considerable suspicion and mistrust on the part of the "Europeans" within the Messina grouping. They construed them quite correctly as a calculated British move to submerge the Common Market in a more inclusive but far less powerful organization. Interestingly enough though, the "Europeans" were not the only group which found the scheme objectionable. In his memoirs Lord Gladwyn--the British Ambassador to France--stated that at the time it had never occurred to him that the plan had the slightest chance of success. He recognized and argued that "no real progress in the direction of European integration was likely until both the Common Market and the Free Trade Association came into effect. . . ."[35] An even more astonishing source of criticism of this scheme was The Times of London whose editors had "broadly conceived it to be their duty to support the Government of the day, at least in the field of foreign affairs."[36] On March 1, the newspaper commented on Mr. Lloyd's design in a leading article entitled "A Bewildering

Array:"

> At first sight, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd's grand design has many attractions about it. Much duplication, wasted effort and unnecessary travel would be eliminated. . . . While therefore the ultimate objective of the grand design should not be abandoned, the most that should be attempted now is to proceed by pruning or grafting together as many of the European branches as is politically possible. The best that can be hoped for is to group the medley into two bodies, one broadly covering defence and the other political and social subjects. Or there could be one assembly for the coal and steel and common market groups, and another for the wider association.[37]

Although the article in The Times had indicated that the Conservative forces in the United Kingdom were far from one mind as to the policy the Government should adopt in relation to the economic and political integration of Europe, the dilemma in which the Six found themselves remained essentially the same. The British Government still refused to participate in the development of the new experiment and the problems which were pressing on the Continent remained unresolved. From the point of view of the Six, the only way out of the dilemma was to press on with their own negotiations in Brussels. This they did, and on 25 March 1957, the treaties establishing the E.E.C. and EURATOM were signed in Rome. "European Unity," which for the past twelve years had remained a cant phrase, synonymous with academic theorizing, obscurity and tedium, had at last received the impetus needed to transform it into a realty.

The British officially welcomed the signature of the two Rome treaties. In a communiqué issued in early May, Prime Minister Macmillan remarked that "as a further step towards a united Europe and a contribution to strengthening the European economy"[38] the Common Market could certainly depend on the support of the Conservative Government. The following month, in a speech before the British Chamber of Commerce in Paris, Sir David Eccles--then President of the Board of Trade--embraced the "common market" approach in even more ingratiating language:

> This is one of the masterpieces of history, something above and beyond the ordinary scope of international arrangements. It is a pact which owes its origin to the European tradition of universality and its execution to the humanity, patience and idealism of great Frenchmen and great Europeans. . . ."[39]

The kind of thinking that underlay these profuse protestations of solidarity, however, should not be confused with the language itself. The objective of the Conservative Government remained a multilateral association of the members of the Common Market with the other members of the O.E.E.C.; and the cordial language was merely a façade which would hopefully create the impression that there still existed grounds for some form of political association. Macmillan admitted as much in a series of memoranda sent to Peter Thorneycroft--then Chancellor of the Exchequer--in June and July of 1957. Arguing that the United Kingdom was in a straitjacket as regards economic integration, he pointed out that the only alternative left to the Government was to make the wider Free Trade Area politically more attractive than the narrower Common Market. If this involved the creation of institutions which the Europeans chose to call supranational, so be it. The name was unimportant so long as the organization which resulted conformed to British designs and was ultimately not prejudicial to British interests. If the Government failed to persuade the Six of the efficacy of the Free Trade Area, Mr. Macmillan also had the answer to the resulting stalemate: The United Kingdom would take the lead in opposing the Common Market.[40]

In view of the hard self-interest which motivated the Conservative Government it was little wonder that once the negotiations for the Free Trade Area began in October 1957, only slight progress, if any, was made. Britain not only avoided bargaining with the Six on the really important issues, such as agricultural tariffs and Imperial Preference, she also proved reluctant to court European support for the more liberal scheme through imaginative leadership. In the Intergovernmental Committee set up by the O.E.E.C. to carry out the negotiations, the British delegate, Reginald Maudling, was a minor Government official (Paymaster-General) whose appointment was acknowledged to be indicative of the Government's refusal to appoint a Minister of State for Europe.[41] Consistent with this approach of advocating change but only at the expense of others, the British also structured the agenda of the Intergovernmental Committee in such a way that the problems which they considered important would be dealt with first, while points they considered subsidiary would be placed later on the agenda.[42] Given the fact that the United Kingdom had not as yet garnered the unqualified support of all O.E.E.C. members for her proposals, such audacious behaviour was anything but realistic. The dangers involved in overestimating their own bargaining position and underestimating the implications of the decisions already taken by the Six had apparently not occurred to the British, or at least not disturbed them.

It had become increasingly clear during successive meetings of the Maudling Committee that the intransigence of the British Government on tariff autonomy with third countries--those outside the O.E.E.C.-- would be the major stumbling block of the negotiations. The British assumed that the abolition of barriers to intra-European trade could be achieved irrespective of the commercial relations between each member country of the proposed Free Trade Area and those external to it. Or stated more bluntly, they were using Imperial magnanimity as an excuse to justify their attempts to tap both the European and the Commonwealth markets. What the Six, specifically the French, wanted on the other hand was an external tariff identical to or at least resembling closely the one which was shortly to be introduced in the Common Market. At the very least, they wanted the members of the proposed Free Trade Area to agree to change their tariffs with third countries only with the consent of all other FTA members. Otherwise, they argued, unilateral reductions in tariffs would distort competition between member states and "impede the attainment of the objectives of the FTA."[43]

In this complicated situation, it is understandable that the Six should have taken the initiative to break the deadlock. In the Common Market they already had a functioning economic and political community, and if the proposed Free Trade Area conformed to the British thesis this would all be threatened. They were also concerned lest acceptance of a Free Trade Area of the type proposed by the Conservative Government would imply a willingness on their part to defer to British leadership in the movement towards European unification. In short, they had the most to lose if the British version of the FTA became a reality, and the preparation of an alternative approach offered at least a slight chance that in the end the Intergovernmental Committee could be persuaded to their way of thinking.

The Memorandum setting out the agreed views of the European Economic Community was presented to the Maudling Committee on 20 October 1958.[44] As expected, it began by solemnly reaffirming the Community's determination "both for economic and political reasons, to arrive at an agreement which will make it possible to associate with the Community on a multilateral basis the other Member States of the O.E.E.C." This general statement of intent was followed by a far more important point, namely, that the Free Trade Agreement "must not in any way prejudice either the content or the implementation of the Treaty of Rome." Clearly, the Six took it as a given that their own trading arrangements embodied in the Treaty of Rome were valid and would not be subordinated to the proposed FTA. Moreover, they also considered the term "Free Trade Area" a misnomer since it did not correspond to the economic system they envisaged and accordingly they suggested that the title "European Economic Association" be adopted in its stead.

Unfortunately for both Britain and Europe, the views expressed in this the first section of the Memorandum foreshadowed the positions in the negotiations which followed. Fundamentally opposed to the idea of surrounding the Common Market with a Free Trade Area, the Six proved amenable to discussion only if their obligations to the former organization were not brought into question. The British, who were themselves masters at equivocation, naturally recognized the maneuvering for what it was and wasted no time in denouncing it.[45] By this time, however, it had become obvious to all that a continuation of the negotiations would be futile. On 14 November 1958, Jacques Soustelle--the French Minister of Information--announced that the French Government considered it impossible to form a Free Trade Area as envisaged by the British. Without a common external tariff and without harmonization in the economic and social spheres, Europe could not hope to master its problems:

> Il est apparu à la France qu'il n'était pas
> possible de creer la zone de libre-échange, comme
> l'avaient souhaite les Britanniques, c'est-à-dire
> par l'establissement du libre-échange entre les
> six pays du Marché commun et les onze autres pays
> de l'O.E.E.C., et cela faute d'un tarif douanier

> unique à la lisière des six-sept pays et faute d'harmonisation dans les domaines économique et social.
>
> Cela ne signifie pas qu'il n'y ait pas une solution donnant satisfaction aux six pays du Marché commun et aux autres pays de l'Europe occidentale dans leurs rapports mutuels sur le plan économique. Le gouvernement français, pour sa part, s'emploie activement à en chercher une. Aussi ne faut-il pas interpreter la position actuelle comme une port fermée. Si la solution que propose la Grande-Bretagne ne paraît pas acceptable telle quelle, l'étude du probleme doit être poursuive.[46]

In both Paris and London, representatives of the Conservative Government reacted with remarkable astonishment to the French announcement. In a speech delivered in the French capital on November 14, Maudling suggested that the suspension of the negotiations was due solely to purposeful French misrepresentation of British conduct.[47] In a subsequent statement made in the House of Commons on November 17, the Paymaster-General, while more understanding of the French position, still managed to imply that they were in a minority when they suggested that no solution to the present difficulties could be found within the framework of a Free Trade Area.[48] The Home Secretary, Mr. R. A. Butler, also managed to imply that Great Britain was blameless as far as the breakdown in the negotiations was concerned. "The dispute," he claimed "[was] really between France and Europe." The implication was that the Conservative Government had had the best of intentions, and was legitimately concerned about the maintenance of a good relationship with the Continent, but could really do nothing until the Europeans had come to an agreement among themselves.[49] In the same vein but far more intemperate in tone was the leading article entitled "France the Wrecker" which The Times ran on November 18. As usual, the Six felt that The Times was speaking for the Government when it blamed the French for wrecking the negotiations:

> By the end of last week the French Government had evidently realised that there was no more scope for the tactics of delay and diversion which it had been practising in the Free Trade Area negotiations for months past. . . .
>
> It is not too much to say that France has wrecked the negotiations single-handed after wasting many precious months in sheer prevarication. Neither Britain nor any of the other non-Community countries has ever refused to consider concessions and a willingness to negotiate remains. It is now up to the other members of the Community to see that the negotiations are put back on course.[50]

What was noteworthy about these and other similar statements was the fact that the Government had had ample warning prior to November 14, that the French were dissatisfied with the course of the negotiations and would in all likelihood bring them to an immediate conclusion. The French press had been speculating for months on the probable course of action their Government would take in the free trade discussions and the results of their theorizing in no way favoured the British position.[51] More significantly, the Prime Minister himself had been cautioned by De Gaulle as early as 5 July 1958, that the negotiations could be suspended if they in any way threatened the existing agreements of the European Economic Community.[52] Clearly then, there was no basis for the British accusation that the French move was either unexpected or unduly puzzling.

What seems likely is that, confronted with failure, the British attempted to shift the blame totally on to the French. The latter, by taking the initiative and bringing to a close the hopelessly deadlocked negotiations, admittedly furnished a convenient point with which the British could take issue. But the fact still remains that by prevaricating and constantly avoiding discussion of contentious issues, Britain was as much to blame for the breakdown as was France.

Not unexpectedly, the collapse of the Maudling negotiations in November 1958, failed to dampen British enthusiasm for the concept of a Free Trade Area. Having developed expectations of gain from participation in the fourteen months of negotiations, the Conservative Government was ill-prepared simply to abandon the concept and map out an entirely new European policy. The fiction was that the "pragmatic, co-operative, evolutionary approach to 'European unity'"[53] had not lost its validity, but merely required the proper institutional framework within which to operate.

The British tendency to take refuge in institutional appearances was fed and strengthened in this case by the activities of the industrial federations and employers' organizations in the "Other Six"--the United Kingdom, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Austria and Switzerland. During the early Spring of 1958, representatives of the above-mentioned groups had met several times to discuss what action they should take in case of a breakdown in the O.E.E.C.

negotiations and the creation of a Free Trade Area amongst themselves had been considered as a distinct possibility.[54] In December 1958, two of the most active exponents of the "Little Free Trade Area," namely, the Federation of British Industries and the Swedish Industrial Federation, took an even more pronounced stand and issued a statement which called for the immediate establishment of a trading association among the "Other Six." The report of the six federations that had been issued the preceding April was to serve as the basis upon which the negotiations would begin and it was also stated that the new trading association should be so shaped as to facilitate future relations with the European Economic Community.[55] The obvious inadequacy of the present trading arrangements on the Continent was the motivating factor which lay behind the broad plan; the two industrial organizations being of the opinion that mere inaction was the least desirable of all courses.

Within the Conservative Government the concept of a "Little Free Trade Area" was not given serious consideration until mid-February 1959, when Maudling brought the subject up during the House of Commons debate on the failure of the Free Trade Area negotiations.[56] Receptive but rather circumspect, the Paymaster-General pointed out that Britain had indeed the right "to look for opportunities of expanding trade in other areas," but that there might also be disadvantages to the proposed scheme. "All I would say about it now," he continued "is that it is a matter on which the

Government will certainly keep an open mind, and all suggestions of this kind we shall be very glad to examine." It seems clear that at this time no decision, in principle, had been taken by the Government; rather, it would wait until the Continental members of the "Outer Seven"--Portugal had now joined the group--had taken a definite stand either for or against forming EFTA and then act accordingly.

By the Spring of 1959, support amongst the "Outer Seven" for the concept of a European Free Trade Association had increased greatly. In mid-March, economic experts from the Seven met in Stockholm for exploratory talks and in early June duly accredited Government representatives continued the discussions at the resort town of Saltsjobaden. The product of the latter meeting was a draft plan which, with a few minor alterations, was eventually approved by the Ministers of the Seven on 21 and 22 July 1959.[57] Since the over-riding interest of the participating powers was finding an acceptable arrangement with the Common Market, the Stockholm draft plan was of necessity conciliatory in tone. The press release issued on 21 July 1959, attested to the fact that the EFTA was, for its members, a transitional arrangement, a prelude to a larger agreement which would include the members of the European Economic Community:

> The object of this association would be to strengthen the economies of its members by promoting expansion of economic activity, full employment, a rising standard of living and financial stability. Ministers affirmed that in establishing a European Free Trade Association it would be their purpose to facilitate early negotiations both with the European Economic

> Community and also with the other members of the O.E.E.C. who have particular problems calling for special solutions. These negotiations would have as their object to remove trade barriers and establish a multilateral association embracing all members of the O.E.E.C. Governments would thus be able to reinforce European economic co-operation within the O.E.E.C. and to promote the expansion of world trade.[58]

Once the Seven had formally agreed to the establishment of a E.F.T.A., the drafting of the actual Convention proceeded very rapidly. On September 8, Government officials began discussions in Stockholm and a scant six weeks later, on 20 November 1959, the completed document was initiated by the Seven Ministers. In keeping with the declaration of July 21, a schedule of tariff reductions was set up which would enable the "Outer Seven" to catch up to the Common Market by 1 July 1960 and thereafter to keep pace with them.[59] One provision which should be mentioned, however, is that each member state had the right to secede from the E.F.T.A. on twelve months' notice. The implication was that the Association was not a permanent organization, but rather a stepping stone to a wider arrangement which would hopefully include all O.E.E.C. powers.[60]

The British decision to go ahead with the European Free Trade Association marked a watershed in her relations with the Continent. The shaky foundation upon which all previous Anglo-Continental connections had been based appeared at last to have been strengthened, for the British had committed themselves to a regional organization whose objectives would not be solely dictated by them. There appear to have been four arguments which convinced the Conservatives that such a move was in the best interests of the British nation.[61] First, they were concerned lest inaction on their part should result in individual members of the "Outer Seven" being coerced into joining the European Economic Community. If this were to happen, not only would the chances of forming a broad multilateral association be severely diminished, but the bilateral agreements generated would inevitably discriminate against the United Kingdom economically as well as politically. Mr. Macmillan pointed this unhappy fact out as early as 7 July 1959, and cited several examples of where the pull of the Common Market had already cost Britain dearly.[62] Second, it was thought that the economic pressure brought to bear on the Six through the formation of a E.F.T.A. would increase their interest in a settlement of the European dilemma. In early May editors of The Economist neatly summarized this argument under the heading "Short of Coppers"--"The little free trade area would divert a considerable quantity of trade, but create relatively little. It [was] intended as a means of pressure on the Six."[63] Third, it was argued by many that the establishment of a E.F.T.A. would prove, once and for all, that a Free Trade Area--as well as a customs union--was a practical proposition for Europe. Mr. Heathcoat Amory--then Chancellor of the Exchequer--was particularly convinced of this argument. During the Commons debate on the motion to approve the Government's action in accepting the Stockholm Convention, he maintained that the rapidity with which the Seven countries had reached agreement was a good augury for the success of the Association's economic and political objectives.[64] Finally, the Conservative Government was disposed to believe that the establishment of a E.F.T.A. would convince the Six that the non-members of the Common Market were not overly anxious "to sink the identity of the Common Market in a wider association."[65] The intention of the British enthusiasts was still to create a Free Trade Area; but this time, the "Six" as well as the "Seven" were to function as separate and distinct entities. The integrity of the Treaty of Rome would be maintained since the Common Market powers would have to agree amongst themselves before undertaking any commitments to the European Free Trade Association.

Such, then, was the first formal commercial agreement between Britain and the Continent. Its validity, however, was brought into question less than twenty-four hours after the initialing ceremony. "It is a neat arrangement on paper." argued The Times on 21 November 1959, but "what does it mean in terms of people . . . goods made and consumed . . . wages earned and paid?"[66] In light of the fact that the agreement was to be "based on the principle of reciprocity," and open to "all countries interested in European economic co-operation"[67] the answers to these questions would most certainly be of the utmost importance. The Government nevertheless, was unable to respond, and this more than anything else signified that the EFTA project was not the best of the European alternatives open to the British at this time. The "Little Free Trade Area" was basically a half-way house between the status quo and British membership in the Common Market, but in terms of European trade, the benefits from participation in the EFTA could not hope to compare with those that would likely accrue to Britain if she were to enter the E.E.C.

In an excellent article on Britain's relationship with Europe in the early 1960s, two scholars of European unification commented that "if one institution can apparently substitute so well for another, then the original negotiations could not have been of such primary importance in the first place."[68] It was an apt observation on Britain's preoccupation with the E.F.T.A. Unaccustomed, and indeed unwilling, to accept the uncomfortable evidence of a reduction of British power on a Continent dominated by the French and Germans, the Conservative Government resorted to the "easy use of magic expedients and symbols,"[69] and invested them with a power which they did not possess. Confronted by the status quo, the British had resolved to prevent its change and to freeze European unity at its present level.[70] This the "Europeans" could not accept, for the challenge as far as they were concerned was not purely an economic one, rather it was an economic and political one. Their aim was European economic, and to a slightly lesser extent, political unity.

During the year and a half which preceded Britain's first formal application to join the European Economic Community in July 1961, the attitude of the Conservative Government changed little from that outlined in the above paragraph. Of the few possible solutions to the European problem that were put forward, all concentrated on the economic aspects of integration and totally ignored the conspicuous preference of the Six for a policy directed at creating a political unity as well. Mr. Macmillan in his writings epitomized this particular strain of thought. In a note to the Chancellor of the Exchequer dated 12 August 1960, he asked that the Economic Steering Committee headed by Sir Frank Lee[71]--Permanent Secretary at the Treasury--consider in detail four proposals that he had formulated. The first was a suggestion that the Six should join the E.F.T.A. The second was an arrangement whereby the United Kingdom would join the E.E.C., but only on the condition that the Commonwealth would keep its present proportion of the British market for foodstuffs. The third involved a special exemption for Britain within the common tariff which would enable her to maintain a limited form of free-entry for Commonwealth agricultural goods and raw materials. The fourth and final proposal was a revived industrial Free Trade Area in which agricultural products would be excluded but a common external tariff accepted.[72] Clearly then, the Prime Minister had concerned himself almost exclusively with economic affairs; but what made the British approach even more untenable was the fact that the Agricultural Committee of the E.E.C.

had stated but one month before that there was a very close connection between agriculture and the economy of the Six in general.[73] For the Conservative Government to attempt to remove the former from the Common Market was a grave mistake. Unfortunately, however, such behaviour was indicative of the attitude the British were to display during the negotiations for their entry into the European Economic Community.

A much more cautious attitude typified the Government's main statement of policy which came on 25 July 1960. Significantly, however, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, who delivered the speech, still maintained that the Government's approach to the European problem was not necessarily wrong:

> We in Britain regard ourselves as part of Europe. By history, by tradition, by civilization, by sentiment, by geography, we are part of Europe . . . if Britain were to be regarded as outside Europe, we could not fulfill our complete role in the world. Nor do I believe that Europe would be complete without us.
>
> . . . I state categorically our wish for a united Europe, politically, economically and commercially. But there are different ways of attaining this. Some people talk of integration, others of federation, others of confederation, others again of association. One is not any the less a good European because one prefers one method rather than another.[74]

Yet the point of the matter remained that the method of approach was all important. The "European" powers were intent on the creation of a united Europe--de Gaulle's l'Europe des patries--and in light of the fact that it was the British who were trying to enter an already established European community, the views of the latter were obviously of greater import. It was certainly true as the Bow Group--

the group "representing advanced younger conservative thinking"[75]--has argued, that the policy of joining Europe implied no change in British aims. These remained what they had always been, namely, survival of the nation, and the promotion of British freedom, peace and prosperity.[76] But at the same time it was also true that the decision to enter the European community meant accepting limitations on British sovereignty to an extent never contemplated before. The prospect of being out-voted and overruled in European matters, in addition to severing the very important ties with the Commonwealth and the United States, was more than the Conservative Government would accept.

The Conservative Government of Great Britain entered on 1961 with a degree of satisfaction inconsistent with the somber state of Anglo-Continental relations. Having accepted the possibility of full membership in the Common Market,[78] the Government assumed that if the decision to enter was taken, their European counterparts--many of whom had indicated their concern for close co-operation with the United Kingdom[79]--would welcome them with open arms and gladly amend their policies to conform to British wishes. Commonwealth opinion also strengthened the British resolve to enter the Common Market on their own terms. In a White Paper presented to Parliament in July 1961, the Commonwealth ministers indicated that while they were certainly not enthralled with the idea of British membership in the E.E.C., they recognized that "it was a matter for decision by the British Government."[80]

The formal decision to seek membership in the European Economic Community was announced in the House of Commons on 31 July 1961. Mr. Macmillan, who had by now assumed the role of chief protagonist in favour of British entry, conveyed the Cabinet's decision[81] to the House:

> During the past nine months, we have had useful and frank discussions with the European Economic Community Governments. We have now reached the stage where we cannot make further progress without entering into formal negotiations. . . . Her Majesty's Government have come to the conclusion that it would be right for Britain to make a formal application under Article 237 of the Treaty for negotiations with a view to joining the Community if satisfactory arrangements can be made to meet the special needs of the United Kingdom, of the Commonwealth and of the European Free Trade Association.[82]

In his contention that it was necessary to safeguard the interests of British agriculture--"the special needs of the United Kingdom,"--the Commonweath and the E.F.T.A., the Prime Minister once again demonstrated his political acumen. For one thing, it was not likely that the three groups affected would have been prepared to welcome the proposal had such a statement not been issued. For another, it provided the Government with a convenient scapegoat that could bear the blame if the negotiations failed. What should be equally clear is that Macmillan made these stipulations precisely because he had not yet converted the entire Conservative party membership to the idea of British membership in a European union. His decision in fact "flew in the face of most of the instincts of the Conservative Party."[83] But partly because of the party's traditional deference to authority, i.e., the leader of the Party, and partly because power tends to act as a solidifier in politics--that is to say the leader of the party in power will be more successful in convincing his membership of the efficacy of a certain policy than will the leader of the Opposition--he was able to make the decision stand.[84]

Once the formal negotiations began in Brussels between Britain and the Common Market Council of Ministers, the areas of disagreement quickly became apparent. The British, whose official statement was delivered on 10 October 1961--Mr. Edward Heath's address to the Ministers of the E.E.C. at Paris[85]--once again stressed that "special arrangements" had to be made for the Commonwealth and British agriculture before they could commit themselves to the Common Market. Upon these issues the negotiations eventually floundered.

On the surface there appeared to have been very little discrepancy between the agricultural policy of the Six and that of Great Britain. Both were "fully committed to the maintenance of a stable, efficient and prosperous agriculture"[86] and both had set up an elaborate support system to ensure that a fair standard of living would be maintained for their agricultural producers.[87] Moreover, as of October 1961, the Conservative Government was also willing to accept "that the Common Market must extend to agriculture and trade in agricultural products."[88] This veneer of co-operation, however, could not conceal the basic incongruity between the British and the Continental agricultural systems. To many

Conservatives the agricultural vote was the foundation upon which the Party rested and they were unwilling to see the support system at present in force in the United Kingdom adulterated through adherence to the common policy of the E.E.C.[89] In fact, a condition under which support was given to Macmillan at the 1961 Conservative Party Conference was that special concessions be obtained for British agriculture.[90]

The first serious encounter with the Six over the issue of British agriculture came in late July 1962. Until then the Six had been unable to negotiate meaningfully on this issue, since they had not come to an agreement amongst themselves. The dispute centered on the question of whether or not the British should be allowed a special transitional period in which to bring their agricultural policies into harmony with those of the Six. The Conservative Government argued that the transitional arrangements should continue for a period of twelve to fifteen years from when they joined. Timing would of course vary from commodity to commodity, but they wanted it generally recognized that Britain faced rather acute agricultural problems and could not keep pace with the accelerated program of the Six.[91] The members of the E.E.C. on the other hand, were not prepared to extend the transitional arrangements beyond the limits they had set for themselves.[92] Their representatives had in fact pointed out as early as June 1960, that British agriculture had a number of basic advantages--for example, mild climate, and fertile and larger sized farms--and that there was really no need for an extension of their own 1969 limit. Moreover, they also argued that if exception clauses were given to British agriculture other members of the Common Market, particularly the Federal Republic of Germany, would press for similar concessions and the whole existence of the Community might be threatened.[93] Unfortunately, neither side in the dispute was prone to compromise and when the negotiations reached a deadlock in October 1962, little effective progress had been made.[94]

The agricultural difficulties the Conservative Government faced over entry into the Common Market were admittedly very real. There was little doubt that food prices would increase and there was also the likelihood that income-tax revenues would be reduced by the amount which in the past had been used for deficiency payments.[95] It seems to be clear, however, that during the course of the negotiations the Government concentrated solely on these and other similar disadvantages and completely ignored the advantages or, more important, the opportunities available to Britain if she joined the Community. The Anti-Common Market utterances of men such as Harold Woolley[96]--President of the National Farmer's Union-- appear to have been accepted at face value, while the pro-E.E.C. statements of distinguished scholars and influential men within the Conservative party organization itself were somehow categorized as totally unrealistic.[97]

The vociferous manner in which the anti-marketeers campaigned against British entry can explain, at least in part, why the Government apparently deferred to their wishes. Their outspokenness, however, does not detract from the fact that they were definitely in the minority, and within the Tory Government managed to attract no more than forty-seven out of a total of well over three-hundred members.[98] As The Economist was constrained to point out, the arguments in favour of going into the E.E.C. were "Much More Than Fifty-Fifty," and that those who argued the opposite had "not made the necessary intellectual effort to think through the real economic problems, past the stage of static analysis to that of dynamic evolution."[99]

The negotiations on Commonwealth interests differed slightly from the agricultural discussions in that the Conservative Government was more willing to retreat from its original position--according to Heath's speech on 10 October 1961[100]--and bargain in terms preferred by the E.E.C. The object of Heath's policy in this regard was to ensure that if Britain did abandon the Commonwealth structure, the Common Market would in return be given an outward-looking tendency.[101] His original demands focused primarily on "comparable outlets" for all Commonwealth trade. That is to say, the latter were to be allowed equal access to both U.K. and E.E.C. markets from the date of British entry into the Common Market. The Six of course were adverse to any such arrangement and for the eleven month period prior to August

1962--when the negotiations were recessed for three months--the debate was fast and furious as to which side would prevail. The Six argued that to give the Commonwealth countries equal access to the E.E.C. markets would "freeze the pattern of world trade,"[102] and serve as an alibi for the sixteen-national organization[103] to discontinue its search for new markets. They also pointed out that to open the Continent to Commonwealth products during the transition period would be a violation of the principle of community preference and hence of the Treaty of Rome. The weight of these arguments eventually proved superior to Heath's dogmatic insistence that Europe continue to show a "sympathetic comprehension"[104] for Britain's approach towards world trade. By August 1962, he was forced to abandon the concept of "comparable outlets" and discuss instead "a harmonious development of world trade including a satisfactory level of trade between itself [the E.E.C.] and third countries, including Commonwealth countries."[105]

The August recess in the Common Market negotiations produced quite a stir within the Conservative Party organization. Many party members felt that a real conflict of interest existed between "Britain as a Commonwealth and Britain as a European power,"[106] and were vociferous in demanding that national sovereignty and the Commonwealth connection be maintained at all costs. Walker-Smith exemplified, better than most, this excessive concern for the Commonwealth, and at the Llandudno Conference in October

1962 was able to rally about fifty other Conservative members in support of no entry.[107] The efforts of both Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Heath to induce a change of heart in these dissenting individuals were singularly ineffective. The October publication of Britain, the Commonwealth and Europe, a pro-E.E.C. pamphlet authored by the Prime Minister, did not avert Walker-Smith's harangues, and Mr. Heath's equally affirmative stance in the House of Commons failed to prevent the introduction of an anti-E.E.C. resolution which called on the Government to stand firm even if this meant a total breakdown in the negotiations.[108]

When the discussions resumed in December 1962, Heath and his "flying knights"[109]--Sir Pierson Dixon, British Ambassador to France and official head of the British negotiating team; and Sir Eric Roll, deputy head of the delegation--found themselves in a hopelessly deadlocked situation. The concessions they had made in August had come too late to allow for any impetus to be built up within the program of the Six as whole, and the French were particularly insistent that special treatment not be accorded the British. As a result, only a few minor questions relating to Malta, Cyprus and the African protectorates were settled at the Ministerial meeting on December 19 and 20.[110] The contentious issue of New Zealand dairy products and lamb remained unresolved. The situation was further complicated at this point by Macmillan's rather untimely acceptance of the American offer to sell Britain Polaris missiles.[111] For De Gaulle, this was conclusive proof that the United Kingdom was still intrinsically tied to the United States and was not at all serious in her bid to enter Europe and become a truly European nation. At a dramatically staged press conference in Paris on 14 January 1963, he *de facto* brought the negotiations to an end by pointing out the basic incompatibility of Britain to the European Economic Community:

> If England asks in turn to enter, but on her own condition, this poses without doubt to each of these six states, and poses to England, problems of a very great dimension. . . . What is to be done in order that England, as she lives, produces and trades, can be incorporated into the Common Market, as it has been conceived and as it functions? For example the means by which the people of Great Britain are fed and which are in fact the importation of foodstuffs bought cheaply in the two Americas and in the former dominions, at the same time giving, granting considerable subsidies to English farmers. These means are obviously incompatible with the System which the Six have established quite naturally for themselves.[112]

In London, the Conservative Government reacted with surprise and indignation to De Gaulle's veto of British membership in the European Economic Community. In his broadcast to the nation on 30 January 1963--following the indefinite adjournment of the Brussels negotiations on January 29--the Prime Minister accused the French Government of looking backwards and attempting to dominate Europe. He further stated that the abrupt and brutal manner in which the negotiations were brought to an end was consistent with previous French behaviour. They had always hoped that the discussions would fail, "hoped that the Commonwealth would turn them down, or perhaps that the Conservative Party at their

Conference would turn them down."[113] There were, however, few facts upon which the British could draw to substantiate the implication that the French were solely responsible for the breakdown in the negotiations. The intransigence of the British had in fact been the major cause of the innumerable delays and the eventual collapse. During the entire course of the negotiations, they had never once come to the realization that it was for them to buy their subscription to the European Economic Community and not for the Six to buy British membership.[114]

Notes to Chapter Three

[1] Paul-Henri Spaak, The Continuing Battle--Memoirs of a European 1936-1966, trans. Henry Fox (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), pp. 184-185.

[2] Maurice Torrelli, Great Britain and Europe of the Six: The Failure of Negotiations, trans. Cameron Nish (Montreal: Les Presses de L'Ecole Des Hautes Etudes Commerciales, 1969), p. 9.

[3] Nora Beloff, The General Says No: Britain's Exclusion From Europe (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1963), p. 60.

[4] Barker, p. 150.

[5] Correspondence arising out of the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Governments of Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands held at Messina on June 1-2, 1955 (Cmnd. 9525, HMSO, 1955) p. 7.

[6] The results of the Bonn meeting between Dr. Adenauer--West German Chancellor--and M. Pinay--French Foreign Minister--were twofold: First, the two countries agreed to establish a committee for joint economic co-operation. Second, they acknowledged the need for a new impulse in the movement toward European unification, and singled out transportation, aeronautical construction and nuclear research as the fields in which new steps might be taken. Camps, p. 22.

[7] Cmnd. 9525, p. 9.

[8] Ibid.

[9] According to the Messina Resolution a committee of governmental representatives, assisted by experts and headed by a political personality--in this case M. Paul-Henri Spaak, the Belgian Foreign Minister--was to do the preparatory work for an intergovernmental conference which would prepare the texts of the treaties establishing the European Economic Community. Ibid., p. 8.

[10] Ibid., p. 10.

[11] Camps, p. 30.

[12] Ibid., p. 34.

[13] Harold Macmillan, Riding The Storm 1956-1959 (London: Macmillan, 1971), pp. 70-71.

[14] Camps, p. 43.

[15] The reaction in Brussels to the British withdrawal was outlined succinctly in "Britain and Europe's "Third Chance"," The Economist, November 19, 1955, pp. 633-634. The most incisive statement read: "Unless the British Government will say what it will do, not simply what it will not do, a time may soon come when it will find that it has missed a bus that it will wish that it had caught."

[16] See Chapter One, pp. 1-2.

[17] Financial Times, 6 February 1956. Quoted in Camps, p. 47.

[18] D. C. Watt maintains that this "special relationship" with the United States was based on "assumptions of common intellectual inheritance and common points of view and common purposes." Personalities and Policies--Studies in the Formulation of British Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century (London: Longmans, 1965), p. 49. To corroborate his opinion he cites Sir Harold Butler, Confident Morning (1950), p. 162. "It took me some-time and several visits to America to get this notion [that the United States had a different social philosophy and a different political system] . . . firmly into my head. It took me rather longer to perceive that in spite of all the sharp contrasts between the American and the British ways of thought and action they were rooted in the same subsoil of ideas and ideals."

[19] Paragraph three, subsection I of the Messina Resolution called for "the creation of a common organization to be entrusted with the responsibility and the means for ensuring the peaceful development of atomic energy. . . ." Cmnd. 9525, p. 7.

[20] Camps, pp. 47-49.

[21] In the New York Times, 6 December 1955, James Reston wrote that "Secretary of State Dulles is taking the lead here [Washington] in urging the West European nations not to be down-hearted about the failure to unify Germany but to concentrate on working for European unity while they are working for German unity. He said at this news conference last week . . . that the West 'shouldn't just sit around waiting' for the unification of Germany. 'They should go

ahead with the plans for the increasing of integration and unity of Europe,' he added. 'I am not thinking primarily in terms of the military unification, although that is important. I am thinking more in terms of the general development of the 'European idea' and moving toward a United States of Europe in terms of economic and political unity, either on a broad basis or on a functional basis through the development of such institutions as the Coal and Steel Community.'"

[22] Hansard, Vol. 555 (July 5, 1956), col. 1674.

[23] Ibid., cols. 1677-1679.

[24] Heiser, p. 102.

[25] Hansard, Vol. 561 (November 26, 1956), cols. 37-38. Mr. Macmillan expressed substantially the same views at the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' meeting held in Washington on September 29. Concerned lest the whole European Plan conform solely to the supranationalist precepts of the Six, he called for the creation of a Free Trade Area in which Britain would maintain its freedom of action in the field of imports from countries other than O.E.E.C. members. For a more detailed account of what was known as the "G Plan," see Macmillan, Riding The Storm, pp. 753-754.

[26] "Britain into Europe," The Economist, 26 January 1957, p. 263.

[27] O.E.E.C., Report on the Possibility of Creating a Free Trade Area in Europe, January 1957.

[28] S. E. Finer, "The Federation of British Industries," Political Studies 4 (February 1956): 65.

[29] FBI European Integration Panel, Memo: "Economic Integration of Western Europe," prepared for Overseas Trade Policy Committee, D/998A, September 2, 1956. Cited in Lieber, p. 58.

[30] National Farmers' Union, Year Book (1957), p. 13. Noted in Ibid., p. 52.

[31] A European Free Trade Area--United Kingdom Memorandum to the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (Cmnd. 72, HMSO, February 1957), p. 5.

[32] Camps, p. 111.

33 See Spaak, pp. 235-236.

[34] Lord Gladwyn, The Memoirs of Lord Galdwyn (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), p. 292 and Camps, p. 120.

[35] Gladwyn, p. 292.

[36] Watt, p. 11.

[37] "A Bewildering Array," The Times, 1 March 1957.

[38] Negotiations for a European Free Trade Area--Report on the course of Negotiations up to December, 1958 (Cmnd. 648, HMSO, January 1959), p. 4.

[39] Quoted in Camps, p. 125.

[40] Macmillan, Riding The Storm, pp. 436-437.

[41] Ibid., p. 438.

[42] Negotiations for a European Free Trade Area--Documents Relating to the Negotiations from July, 1956, to December, 1958 (Cmnd. 641, HMSO, January 1959), pp. 50-59. It was because of Mr. Maudling's position as Chairman of the Intergovernmental Committee--henceforth known as the Maudling Committee--that the British were able to take the initiative in this matter.

[43] Ibid., pp. 98-99.

[44] Ibid., pp. 96-104.

[45] The Times, 10 November 1958. "There is a growing sense in both Whitehall and Parliament that the prolonged negotiations on the setting up of a European free trade area have now reached a critical point, and that all the hopes the Government have been building on the project are more likely than not to be dashed by the French . . . in informed quarters there is a feeling that only the intervention of the heads of Government would now succeed in changing the fixed attitude of the French."

[46] L'Annee Politique (1958), p. 482. Quoted in Camps, p. 165. "It has become apparent to France that it is not possible to create the free-trade areas as the British have wished, that is to say by having to establish free trade

between the six common market countries and the eleven other countries of the O.E.E.C. without a common external tariff and without harmonization in the economic and social spheres.

This does not signify that there is no solution to satisfy the six common market countries and other West European countries in their mutual economic relationships. The French Government, for its part, is actively at work in seeking one. As well, there is no need to interpret the current position as a closed door. If the solution proposed by Great Britain does not seem acceptable as such, study of the problem ought to be pursued.

[47] The Times, 15 November 1958.

[48] Hansard, Vol. 595 (November 17, 1958), col. 846.

[49] The Times, 18 November 1958.

[50] Ibid.

[51] See for example "L'heure de la vérité' au château de la Muette," Le Monde, 23 October 1958 and "Quatre hypothèses pour sortir de l'impasse les negotiations sur la zone de libre-échange," Le Monde, 6 November 1958.

[52] Macmillan, Riding The Storm, pp. 450-451.

[53] Camps, p. 212.

[54] Free Trade In Western Europe, a joint statement by the Industrial Federations and Employers' Organizations of Austria, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom (Paris: April 14, 1958). Noted in Political and Economic Planning (PEP), The European Free Trade Association--A Preliminary Appraisal (Occasional Paper No. 4, September 7, 1959), pp. 4-5.

[55] The Times, 18 December 1958.

[56] Hansard, Vol. 599 (February 12, 1959), col. 1386.

[57] Stockholm Draft Plan for a European Free Trade Association (Cmnd. 823, HMSO, July 1959).

[58] Ibid., p. 3.

[59] European Free Trade Association--Text of Convention and other Documents Approved at Stockholm on 20th November, 1959 (Cmnd. 906, HMSO, November 1959).

[60] Ibid., p. 26.

[61] Camps, pp. 215-218.

[62] For example, several American firms had recently decided to build their factories in either France or Germany, rather than in the United Kingdom where they were originally to have been located. Harold Macmillan, Pointing The Way 1959-1961 (London: Macmillan, 1972), pp. 52-53.

[63] "Short of Coppers," The Economist, 9 May 1959, p. 508.

[64] Hansard, Vol. 615 (December 14, 1959), col. 1071.

[65] Ibid., col. 1067.

[66] The Times, 21 November 1959.

[67] Hansard, Vol. 614 (November 23, 1959), col. 41.

[68] Peter Nettl, and David Shapiro, "Institutions Versus Realities--A British Approach," Journal of Common Market Studies 2 (July 1963): 26.

[69] Ibid., p. 27.

[70] U. W. Kitzinger, The Challenge of the Common Market (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1961), p. 133.

[71] An interdepartmental committee of senior civil servants entrusted with the difficult task of considering the whole field of possible solutions to the European problem.

[72] Macmillan, Pointing The Way, p. 321.

[73] Political and Economic Planning, Agriculture, the Commonwealth and EEC (London: Political and Economic Planning, 10 July 1961), p. 6.

[74] Hansard, Vol. 627 (July 25, 1960), cols. 1099-1101.

[75] Ronald Butt, "The Common Market and Conservative Party politics, 1961-2," Government and Opposition 2 (April-July 1967): 383.

[76] Bow Group, Britain into Europe (London: Conservative Political Centre, 1962), p. 9.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Hansard, Vol. 627 (July 25, 1960), cols. 1099-1218.

[79] Mr. Macmillan received the following letter from German Chancellor Adenauer on October 21, 1960: "With regard to the European problems France does not seem to try to question the existing treaties. In discussing this matter I have drawn M. Debre's attention above all to the fact that we must try to do everything in our power to overcome the existing differences of opinion between the Customs Union of the Six and the Free Trade Area of the Seven. I hope I have made clear to him the importance of close co-operation with the United Kingdom for preserving the determination and unanimity of the Western World in the difficult times that lie ahead of us." Macmillan, Pointing The Way, p. 322.

[80] Commonwealth Consultations on Britain's Relations with the European Economic Community (Cmnd. 1339, HMSO, July 1961), p. 4.

[81] According to Macmillan's memoirs, the Cabinet had decided on July 22, 1961, to apply to enter the Common Market. See Harold Macmillan, At The End of the Day 1961-1963 (London: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 16-17.

[82] Hansard, Vol. 645 (July 31, 1961), col. 930.

[83] Butt, p. 373.

[84] Ibid. For the response of the Six to Mr. Heath's statement at the meeting with Ministers of the European Economic Community at Paris on October 10 1961, see European Economic Community--Commission, Report to the European Parliament on the state of the negotiations with the United Kingdom (Brussels, February 1963), pp. 14-15.

[85] The United Kingdom and the European Economic Community--Text of the Statement made by the Lord Privy Seal at the meeting with Ministers of Member States of the European

Economic Community at Paris on October 10, 1961 (Cmnd. 1565, HMSO, November 1961).

[86] Ibid., p. 12.

[87] Ibid., p. 13 and PEP, Agriculture, the Commonwealth and EEC, pp. 5-6.

[88] Cmnd. 1565, p. 13.

[89] The support system in Great Britain was based on deficiency payments--that is the Government would make payments to the producers equivalent to the difference between the average market price and the guaranteed price fixed after the Annual Price Review. In the Common Market on the other hand, protective duties and quantitative restrictions were used to maintain prices. PEP, Agriculture, the Commonwealth and EEC, p. 35. Also, for an analysis of the voting power of British agriculture, or its lack thereof, see J. R. Pennock, "The Political Power of British Agriculture," Political Studies 7 (October 1959): 291-296.

[90] Butt, p. 380.

[91] Cmnd. 1565, p. 15.

[92] Robert L. Pfaltzgraff Jr., Britain Faces Europe (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969), p. 122.

[93] P. J. Lardinois, "The United Kingdom and the European Economic Community," Journal of Agricultural Economics 14 (June 1960): 532-533. At the time of writing, the author was Agricultural Attaché at the Royal Netherlands Embassy in London.

[94] Britain did eventually relent and agreed to a six year transitional period. This concession however, came on 15 January 1963, one day after General De Gaulle's veto. George Hutchinson, Edward Heath--A Personal and Political Biography (London: Longman, 1970), p. 111.

[95] Bow Group, Britain into Europe, p. 23.

[96] Mr. Woolley made the following statement on August 23, 1962: "After the months of negotiation between representatives of the British Government and those of the six Common Market countries, the fact has to be faced that the terms have not been achieved which we could regard as providing a

basis for a stable efficient and prosperous industry, safeguarding the interests of British agriculture and horticulture." Quoted in Labour Party Research Department, Twelve Wasted Years, p. 333.

[97] See Peter Self's contribution to "When Britain Joins: A Symposium," Political Studies 34 (January-March 1963): 67-77; Bow Group, Britain Into Europe, p. 25; and PEP, Agriculture, the Commonwealth and EEC, p. 61.

[98] Sir Derek-Walker Smith--former Minister of Health--was the leader of the anti-E.E.C. bloc within the Conservative Party. For an excellent example of his anti-Common Market rhetoric see "League Against the Common Market," The Times, October 5, 1961.

[99] "Much More Than Fifty-Fifty," The Economist, October 6, 1962, p. 21.

[100] Cmnd. 1565, pp. 7-12.

[101] Hutchinson, p. 109.

[102] Ibid.

[103] As of January 1963, the Commonwealth of Nations consisted of the following members: The United Kingdom and dependencies; Canada; Australia and dependencies; New Zealand and dependencies; India; Pakistan; Ceylon; Ghana; Federation of Malaya; Nigeria; Cyprus; Sierra Leone; Tanganyika; Jamaica; Trinidad and Tobago; and Uganda.

[104] European Political Union--Text of a statement by the Lord Privy Seal, the Rt. Hon. Edward Heath, M.B.E., M.P., to the Ministerial Council of Western European Union in London on April 10, 1962 (Cmnd. 1720, HMSO, August 1962), p. 6.

[105] The United Kingdom and the European Economic Community --Report by the Lord Privy Seal on the meeting with Ministers of Member States of the European Economic Community at Brussels from August 1-5, 1962 (Cmnd. 1805, HMSO, August 1962), p. 7.

[106] Macmillan, At The End of the Day, p. 27.

[107] Andrew Roth, Heath and the Heathmen (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 165. A motion tabled in the

House of Commons on July 30, 1962, exhorting the Government to ". . . stand firm and to insist on definite assurances for Commonwealth trade and for the continuance of the power of sovereign decision by the British Parliament and for our agricultural and horticultural policies" managed to attract only 36 Conservative members. Butt, pp. 382-383.

[108] Lieber, p. 205.

[109] Roth, p. 159.

[110] Camps, p. 467.

[111] To add insult to injury, President Kennedy also made the same offer to France. The French, however, had neither the launchers nor the war-heads with which to make use of the missiles, therefore it was an empty offer. Le Monde, 4 January 1963.

[112] The Times, 15 January 1963.

[113] Macmillan, At the End of the Day, p. 369.

[114] Margaret Laing, Edward Heath--Prime Minister (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1972), p. 141.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Labour Party, 1955-1963

> Whatever our approach, we are all agreed on this; we are not, whatever the terms, going to join any rich man's club if it means turning our backs on the rest of the world. (Wilson, October 1962)[1]

> . . . the agricultural Common market is restrictive, autarchic and Schachtian and is an offence to the trading interests of the free world. It will divide, not unite. We should have no part of it. (Wilson, December 1962)[2]

Harold Wilson's characterization of the European Economic Community as a "rich man's club" which would divide rather than unite the free world, was representative of the widespread and intense opposition to the E.E.C. within the Labour Party during the period 1955 to 1963. Never having fully trusted the "capitalist" governments on the Continent--or for that matter their socialist counterparts either[3]--Labour tended to construe the E.E.C. as a Continental bid to submerge the uniquely British way of life in the mélange that was loosely termed "European." As a party ostensibly concerned with the spread of "socialist" principles such as internationalism and egalitarianism,[4] the Labour Party was further distrustful of the Common Market concept of unity because they felt it would merely help the rich nations become wealthier while the poor nations declined. As one Labour spokesman later acknowledged, the need for a constructive plan that would ensure the dynamic expansion of the British economy was obvious, but the restoration of confidence in the Commonwealth connection was to be the key to any such development. In this way, both the United Kingdom and the developing nations--approximately three-quarters of the Commonwealth of Nations--would benefit from the expansion of world trade.[5]

The Labour Party's attitude toward the European Economic Community was thus remarkably akin to that of the Conservatives. The four objections to joining the E.E.C. that the Conservative Governments continuously voiced, that is, the threat to British national interests, Commonwealth and Imperial ties, projection to a wider community and fear of economic strangulation, could all be detected in Labour's official statements as well. The only major point which distinguished them from their Tory colleagues was their tendency to categorize the European socialist parties as excessively doctrinaire.[6] While it is generally agreed among scholars who have studied the Labour Party that many of its policies with regard to the Common Market paralleled those of the Conservatives,[7] it is important to note that the underlying influences that shaped the disposition of the former were considerably different from those which molded the latter. For one thing, the Labour Party felt the Commonwealth of Nations to be its own creation and hence was concerned with its maintenance for humanitarian and political as well as economic reasons. Their pamphleteers, as represented in European Unity, argued that the "overriding aim in the present age must be to unite all non-Communist peoples into a single system which is both economically stable and politically secure." Such a system, they maintained, would preserve both "peace and prosperity" in the free world.[8] A second and equally important factor that influenced the Labour Party's attitude toward the Common Market was the system of limited European arrangements established by the 1945 to 1951 Labour Government. Intergovernmental co-operation was preferred to the limitations of a federal organization and once the precedents had been set the party was bound psychologically to uphold the rationale behind them. In fact, Labour tended to look to world collaboration as the only meaningful solution to European economic and political problems. Participation in regional organizations such as the O.E.E.C. and the Council of Europe was acceptable simply because their objectives did not conflict with the work of the United Nations. The latter organization was the keystone of Labour's foreign policy.[9]

From the available evidence, it seems clear that Labour's reaction to the Messina initiative was consistent with what might be termed a "socialist" policy. The socialist movement in general aimed to achieve the widest measure of international co-operation possible, and the suggestion that Western Europe should combine and form yet another regional grouping which would further divide the community of free nations was antithetical to their way of thinking. The

Labour Party in fact did not respond directly to the invitation sent by the Messina powers to the British Government suggesting that the latter participate in the discussions which would hopefully lead to a unified Europe. Instead, the Party endorsed the Resolution on "The International situation" which was carried at the Fourth Congress of the Socialist International held in London in July 1955.[10] The tenor of the Resolution conveyed the movement's concern for the welfare and security of all peoples, regardless of their political affiliations, and reflected the Labour Party's preference for an intergovernmental as opposed to a federal approach to European unification:

> The Socialist parties maintain the support which they have consistently given to the O.E.E.C. as the broadest based organisation for economic collaboration in Western Europe.
>
> The Council of Europe provides a useful parliamentary forum for European opinion and a centre for the exchange of information and adjustment of national legislation. . . .
>
> In a more limited sphere the European Coal and Steel Community had demonstrated that a supra-national organisation also can work and produce good results.
>
> The Socialist movement reaffirms its support for such developments which are designed to promote freedom, security, welfare and social justice for all the peoples of Europe. . . . The Socialist International declares its solidarity with its comrades and will continue to strive for the peoples of all countries the fundamental human rights to which they are entitled and their freedom and independence.[11]

Beyond foreign policy considerations--the maintenance of international peace and prosperity--certain internal factors also accounted for the fact that within the Labour Party the Common Market issue provoked little or no controversy during the period of the Messina initiative. Chief among these was the tendency on the part of the National Executive Committee to downplay any issue which would likely result in intra-party disputes. Attlee, and later Gaitskell--leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, 1955 to 1963--realized that the question of European unity was indeed a "Pandora's Box"[12] and that the best way to deal with the issue was to keep the lid firmly shut. The point to be made here, was that in order to preserve at least the façade of party unity, the leadership was forced to minimize or ignore the effects upon the United Kingdom and the Continent of British entry into the European Economic Community.

British sovereignty also evoked considerable sentiment. To most Labourites any transfer of British sovereignty to a supra-national authority meant that democratic socialism would be impossible to achieve in Great Britain. Ernest Bevin had stated succinctly Labour's views on this question as early as December 1950. Speaking in the House of Commons during a debate on the Government's conduct in the Council of Europe, Bevin--then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs--stated that the Government could not accept

> . . . an executive body in Europe which though not elected by the people, not even elected by Parliament, can by a majority in a very small group arrive at decisions which, by means of a simple majority, can be imposed upon a State.[13]

Later, those within the Party who ranked among the opponents of British membership in the Common Market--for example, Denis Healey, shadow Commonwealth Secretary; Douglas Jay, shadow President of the Board of Trade; and Harold Wilson, shadow Foreign Secretary[14]--granted that this particular stand was an admirable one for the Party to take and reaffirmed it repeatedly.

Finally, the Party's connection with the Trades Union Congress played a role in shaping Labour's attitude toward Europe.[15] The TUC had always lobbied in favour of full employment, preferably throughout Europe, but definitely within the United Kingdom.[16] If the free movement of labour were to become a reality as was envisaged by the Messina powers, the TUC leaders argued that the threat to full employment in Great Britain would be greatly increased.[17] In retrospect, it appears rather doubtful that this particular stipulation on the part of the Six would have had much effect on the British labour scene. For one thing, the labour shortage on the Continent made it highly unlikely that large numbers of foreign workers would make their way to the United Kingdom.[18] For another, Article 48 of the Treaty of Rome--the article that required the free movement of workers within the Community--stipulated that employed workers could not go looking for work, but "could only accept offers of employment actually made."[19]

Although the Common Market issue provoked little attention during the first year of its existence, the July 1956 announcement by Macmillan that Britain might associate with the Six in a Free Trade Area was a question on which the Party could more easily focus. In the November 1956 debate on European trade policy, Harold Wilson, who was to act as Party spokesman during the FTA negotiations, criticized the Government for its reasoning and proclaimed that there was absolutely no need for the expansion of European trade to be at the expense of Commonwealth interests.[20] The implication was that Labour had now become the sole champion of the Commonwealth connection and that without its intercession the Conservative Government would undoubtedly sacrifice Commonwealth interests for the as yet unknown benefits of a predominantly European affiliation. Wilson then went on to list the safeguards Labour required and for which the Government should press in the negotiations in the O.E.E.C.: Exclusion of agricultural and horticultural products from the agreement; retention of all powers needed for the protection of the British balance of payments; a policy which would aim at full employment within the United Kingdom; improved labour conditions for British workers; prevention of cartels; safeguards on re-exports; and finally, no limitations on double pricing.[21]

Apart from the stipulations regarding full employment and improved labour conditions for British workers, the Labour Party's position on the Free Trade Area resembled closely that of the Conservative Government. This explains, at least in part, why the initial phase of the FTA negotiations failed to produce any violent disagreement between the two political parties. Admittedly, Wilson had argued in favour of maintaining the Commonwealth connection at all costs, but on the whole this demand was not incompatible with the Government's conception of the FTA. His conditions also satisfied the requirements of the TUC and therefore silenced an important element within the Labour Party organization.[22]

Some of the union leaders in fact emerged as advocates of a full scale common market. These included S. Watson--representative of the National Union of Mineworkers on the National Executive Committee--and C. Geddes--a former president of the TUC and a representative of the Executive Committee of the European Regional Organization of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.[23] While the majority of the TUC leadership were not as committed to the "European" ideal as were Watson and Geddes, they did see in the FTA project the prospect of trade expansion, be it vague and liberal. They were also concerned lest a strictly European initiative in the field of economic and political unification would result in Britain having to face expressive problems created by European competition and domination. The first major statement on European free trade made by the General Council of the TUC came in November 1956:

> Our trade with Western Europe would suffer if a Customs Union with which the United Kingdom was not in any way associated was to be formed, our goods would meet tariff barriers where competing goods from countries in the Customs Union would enter free, and the tariffs of some of the present low-tariff countries in Europe might be raised substantially for our goods.

> Moreover, if Britain had no association with the Common Market, and if in time the Common Market did succeed in raising the economic efficiency of its members, while at the same time Britain's relative prosperity and competitiveness suffered through exclusion then clearly this would affect our influence and standing in the world.[24]

Although the necessity of British participation in the various attempts at European economic and political unification was becoming ever clearer, once the FTA negotiations began in earnest the leaders of the Labour Party could not come to an unanimous agreement as to the desirability of British membership in the Free Trade Area. Aneurin Bevan--former Minister of Labour--for one, castigated the Party for not coming out in opposition to the project and commented acridly that "Socialists cannot at one and the same time call for economic planning and accept the verdict of free competition, no matter how extensive the area it covers." "The jungle is not made more acceptable," he argued "just because it is also limitless."[25] His position, however, did not go unchallenged, for just as there was opposition within the Labour Party to the formation of an FTA, so too was there a group which favoured the project. In the September issue of the Socialist Commentary--a journal of the Labour right--the editorial staff called on the Party to support British membership in the Free Trade Area as a "half-way house" to a united socialist Europe. Instead of dreading the effects of Continental socialism, the Commentary argued that the Party should view the project as a great opportunity to strengthen the Socialist parties in all of Western Europe. "Why should we lose ourselves in the fear of being dragged down instead of fastening on the hope of mutual uplift?"[26] The failure to bring forward any motions on the Free Trade Area at the Brighton Conference can be interpreted as tacit approval of the Government's actions. It thus appears that by the fall of 1957, the pro-FTA elements in the Labour Party were on the whole far more representative of Labour thinking than the anti-FTA section, one of whose spokesmen was Bevin.

This rather subdued disagreement, in addition to the minor discontents within the TUC, appear to have been the only semblance of debate within the Labour Party prior to the collapse of the Free Trade Area talks in November. The National Executive Committee, while certainly not enthralled with the idea of establishing an FTA, were willing to tolerate it provided the conditions outlined by Wilson in November 1956 were met,[27] and as long as the negotiations lasted the Government representatives appeared to have been working toward these objectives. With the failure of the discussions, however, the danger of Europe being split into two camps became ever clearer. Nevertheless, the Government's attempt to ameliorate such a regrettable situation through the formation of a European Free Trade Association did not meet with Labour's approval.

In the Parliamentary debates which followed the Government's announcement that it would seek to create a European Free Trade Association, Labour tended to criticize the Conservatives for accepting and indeed promoting a solution which it considered second rate in comparison to a general European free trade area--one which would also include the six countries of the E.E.C. During the mid-February Commons debate on the failure of the FTA negotiations, Harold Wilson maintained that the EFTA would be a "vastly inferior substitute and would perpetuate the division of Europe into two markets."[28] What the Labour Party wanted was a renewal of negotiations which would bring about "a new and effective system of association between [Britain] and [her] colleagues, on the one hand, and the community of Common Market countries on the other."[29] Rooted in the attitude of the shadow cabinet at this time was the assumption that any attempt to pursue a policy of full employment and general social welfare was doomed to failure in a regional organization as restrictive in outlook as was the European Free Trade Association. The success of such a policy, they maintained, lay in having all Western European countries--or as many as could be persuaded to participate--jointly pursuing the same objectives.[30]

During the EFTA negotiations, the views of the TUC paralleled to a large extent those of the Conservative Government. While the leaders of the TUC were inclined to favour a grouping which would include the six members of the E.E.C., they were willing to support the EFTA project in the hope that it would eventually lead to a wider arrangement for Western Europe.[31] Prior to the November signature of the EFTA Convention their role consisted primarily of maintaining contact with both the European union leaders and influential members of the Conservative Government. For example, Alan Birch--Chairman of the TUC's Economic Committee--met several times with Reginald Maudling during the spring and summer of 1959, the latter keeping him informed as to the latest developments in the negotiations.[32] As the discussions drew to a successful conclusion, the representatives of the union's General Council were also assured by the Paymaster-General that the by now familiar points of full employment, economic planning etc., would appear in the final Convention.[33]

After the publication of the EFTA Convention in November 1959, Labour's criticism of the Government increased. Roy Jenkins--MP for Birmingham, Stechford--faulted the Conservatives for thinking that the European Free Trade Association was anywhere near as important, either economically or politically, as the Free Trade Area they had tried to obtain or the Common Market which was already in existence. In terms of population the FTA was far more attractive than the EFTA, and in addition, the Seven were at present a relatively low-tariff area. There would be more value, as far as the British were concerned, if tariffs could be lowered in the high-tariff Common Market.[34] Jenkins also indicated that if Britain did join the EFTA, she would be by far the most influential member in the organization--sixty-five per cent of the G.N.P. of EFTA would be accounted for by Britain. He concluded from this that Britain was in danger of becoming over-confident and unduly smug about the power she could supposedly wield in world affairs. "One of Britain's greatest dangers in the world today," he pointed out, "is trying to live with Powers superior to herself and not being willing to live with her equals."[35]

Wilson's remarks concerning the Commonwealth connection, however, appear to have been more representative of Labour's changing opinion. In the December 1959 Commons debate on EFTA approval, he stated that the Government should not concern itself solely with European affairs:

> If one-tenth of all the energy which [the Government] . . . has put into the European Free Trade Area had been devoted to strengthening inter-Commonwealth markets, and aiming at creating a Free Trade Area for the Commonwealth, we might have been in a far stronger position today.[36]

What Wilson and a good number of his colleagues were constrained to emphasize was that at the moment the EFTA was of little or no consequence as far as the Labour Party was concerned, but if in the future the project was to involve any sacrifice of Commonwealth interests, the Party could be expected to take a more negative stand. The basic objective of the Labour Party was to come to terms with the Six on both a political and an economic level--albeit on their own terms. Failing this, a broader and freer system of world trade should be established whereby the old industrial nations would help the poorer developing ones.

The TUC's involvement in the EFTA controversy also became more pronounced after the signature of the Convention in November 1959. The leaders of the Congress were concerned mostly with the neglect of social provisions and the lack of union representation on the various EFTA councils. The TUC General Council had spent a good deal of time during the course of the negotiations insuring that the Trade Unions would have the right and the machinery to influence economic planning,[37] and they found the overwhelming stress on trade policy in the Convention inconsistent with the Government's previous statements. Maudling tried to temper the TUC's displeasure by suggesting that an advisory body to the EFTA Ministerial Council could be established with representation divided evenly between the employers' organizations and the trade unions.[38] Initially, the advisory council--later known as the Joint Advisory Committee and the Consultative Committee--appeared to have every likelihood of success, but in July 1960, the employers' organizations requested that one representative from banking and finance be allowed to sit on the committee as well. The union representatives naturally objected to the proposal since acquiescence would have assigned to them permanent minority status. The problem was eventually resolved in December 1960, when Maudling came out in favour of banking and finance representation. Faced with a fait accompli, the TUC could do nothing but nominate their two representatives[39] and hope that the fluency and force of their arguments would persuade the Ministerial Council members to their way of thinking.[40]

What stands out in the whole EFTA episode, both within the Labour Party and the TUC, was the lack of serious dissension as to whether or not Britain should approve the Convention. Admittedly, there were a few acrimonious outbursts against British involvement, but they can largely be attributed to the fact that Labour represented Her Majesty's Opposition and such behaviour was expected of an opposition party. On the whole, the leadership as well as the rank and file remained convinced that the inadequacy of the entire project would rule out any benefits to the United Kingdom. This perception that the EFTA was of peripheral importance for British economic and political development can perhaps account for both the low-key manner in which the subject was broached and the fact that Labour abstained in the Parliamentary vote over acceptance of the Convention.

Despite the Labour Party's conviction that the EFTA would not achieve its objectives, renewed criticism of the Conservative Government did materialize when it became evident that this was indeed the case. Their displeasure with what they regarded as undue Conservative complacency with an obviously inadequate organization contributed to the rise in Labour interest in the Common Market.[41]

Although the Labour Party's attitude toward the Common Market was characterized, in general, by a wariness that the organization was a "rich man's club" the restrictive policies of which would inhibit the spread of socialist policies on the Continent, its first mention following the signature of the EFTA Convention constituted a welcome rather than a rebuff. On 26 May 1960, twenty-five Labour MPs led by Roy Jenkins tabled a motion in the House of Commons which called on the Government to

> . . . repair some of the damage to British relations with Europe by a new initiative towards the Six involving willingness to join Euratom, the acceptance of the principle of a customs union, and some sacrifice of British sovereignty if this is necessary to promote closer political unity.[42]

George Brown--deputy leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party --followed up the motion by bluntly informing the 60th Annual Conference that the Commonwealth was not a viable alternative to membership in the Common Market. It was nice to see the sudden revived interest in the former organization, he argued, but it must not be assumed that Britain's current economic difficulties could be solved via adherence solely to the Commonwealth connection.[43] The right-wing of the Party, led by Roy Jenkins, had always in fact been sympathetic to the concept of European unity and although they were a minority within the Party they were at the same time vociferous in espousing their views. The seriousness of their commitment was dramatically illustrated in the late spring of 1961, when Jenkins resigned from the front bench of the Party over the Common Market issue.

For the majority of the Labour Party membership, however, entry into the E.E.C. was antithetical to the Commonwealth connection and their genuine concern for the maintenance of British sovereignty. In the Commons debate on the European Economic Community on July 25, Harold Wilson voiced concern that Britain would not have the necessary freedom of manoeuvre in seeking to build a bridge between the Soviet Union and the United States if she were to identify herself too closely with the foreign policies of some of the Six. He also indicated that despite the fact that the case of uniting with the Six was formidable, Britain ought not to join since the commitment would limit her ability to carry out appropriate social and economic policies in Britain.[44] Denis Healey--Labour's defence spokesman--gave vent to substantially the same fears in an article which appeared in The Financial Times on May 19, 1961. On the political side he argued that if Britain joined the Common Market the neutral states in Europe--Finland, Sweden and Austria--would in all likelihood be forced toward the Soviet Union. Moreover, he pointed out that the same process could also affect the newly emerged African nations. If such was the case, the polarization of the entire free world would ineluctably follow and the prospects for world peace and prosperity would correspondingly decrease. Such a process, Healy felt, should be vigorously opposed.[45] Although his arguments left something to desire in the way of logic, at the time they appeared to be valid points.

Generally speaking, those within the Labour Party who opposed entry into the Common Market came almost exclusively from the left. Members of this group who favoured membership were rare indeed, and in most cases their pro-E.E.C. sentiments were off-set by right wingers who maintained that

Commonwealth interests and British sovereignty dictated against membership in the Community.[46] The political clout which the left-wing possessed was shown at the 60th Annual Conference held in Blackpool in early October 1961. Rejecting a resolution put forward by Roy Jenkins which would have offered unconditional support for British membership in the E.E.C.,[47] the anti-Common Market section of the Party managed to win approval for a largely negative resolution which refused British entry unless adequate guarantees protecting various national interests could be secured.[48] It was resolved that:

> This Conference does not approve Britain's entry into the Common Market, unless guarantees protecting the position of British Agriculture and Horticulture, the E.F.T.A. countries and the Commonwealth are obtained, and Britain retains the power of using public economic ownership and planning as measures to ensure social progress within the United Kingdom.
>
> This Conference also calls on the National Executive Committee to convene a meeting of Socialist leaders of Western Europe and Commonwealth countries to discuss the effects of the Common Market.[49]

By the spring of 1962, the pace of the Brussels negotiations had forced the Labour Party to outline, in ever more forceful language, its anti-Common Market position which Wilson had first articulated in November 1956. In the June 1962 Common debate on the European Economic Community, Labour spokesmen expressed concern that the Conservative Government might not be taking adequate precautions in the Brussels negotiations to ensure the protection of all British interests. They also pointed out that the United Kingdom had certain responsibilities to the Commonwealth and the underdeveloped world in general and should not think of joining until all safeguards had been implemented.[50] The increasingly intolerant tone of the Labour Party's arguments were reinforced by the somewhat ominous picture which the social survey polls presented. For the period December 1961 to April-May 1962, support for entry amongst Labour voters had dropped fourteen per cent. Admittedly those in favour of membership still represented a majority, but the margin which separated them from the opponents of the E.E.C. had shrunk from thirty-two per cent to five per cent.[51]

Gaitskell himself appears to have been influenced by the anti-E.E.C. leanings of his Party. In his Fulham speech on April 14, 1962, he abandoned his previous position to the effect that there were definite political advantages to going into the E.E.C., and stated categorically that the Government should not reach a decision until Parliament, and more importantly, the public had had an opportunity to discuss the terms of entry.[52] The implication was that because of the importance of the issue, a general election should precede any decision as to whether or not Britain would enter the E.E.C.

The uncertainties and doubts that existed within the N.E.C. and those felt by most of the Labour rank and file nourished one another until in September 1962 the Party as a whole finally came out in opposition to British membership in the European Economic Community. In a communiqué issued by the N.E.C. on September 29, the Party agreed that the European Community was "a great and imaginative conception," but emphasized that "for Britain such wide commitments present special and serious difficulties."[53] The Party did not take the view that whatever the circumstances, whatever the conditions, Britain should stay out, but it did maintain that certain safeguards were required since membership in the Community involved commitments which went far beyond previous British relationships with other groups of nations. The key paragraph which laid down the essential conditions for British entry read as follows:

> While deliberately refraining from hobbling the Brussels negotiations by laying down in advance a series of rigid and detailed terms, the Labour Party clearly stated the five broad conditions that would be required:
>
> 1. Strong and binding safeguards for the trade and other interests of our friends and partners in the Commonwealth.
> 2. Freedom as at present to pursue our own foreign policy.
> 3. Fulfilment of the Government's pledge to our associates in the European Free Trade Area.
> 4. The right to plan our own economy.
> 5. Guarantees to safeguard the position of British agriculture.[54]

Given the terse and uncompromising language of the N.E.C.'s statement, it seems obvious that Labour's five conditions were merely a "face-saving formality, which [would] make it easier for the [Labour] Common Marketeers in Parliament to vote against the treaty when the crunch comes in three or four months' time."[55] Gaitskell in fact dismissed any suggestion that there would be either political or economic advantages in membership. In a sustained rationalization delivered before the Brighton Conference on 3 October 1962, he told fellow Labourites that "judged only by the most limited United Kingdom interests," British membership in the E.E.C. "would be wholly disadvantageous."[56] The nation would gain in markets where it sold less than one-fifth of its exports and lose in markets--the E.F.T.A. and the Commonwealth--which accounted for about one-half of its exports. The problem as he saw it, lay not in Britain's markets or the tariffs levied against her; rather it lay within the country itself. In the past Britain had failed to invest enough in research, failed to develop an adequate apprenticeship program and hence had failed to build up the necessary reserves of skilled labour. These problems, however, were of an internal nature, and with concerted planning--preferably by a Labour Government--could be solved without resort to Continental solutions.[57]

Gaitskell's speech against British entry into the Common Market had the strange effect of uniting the Labour Party as never before. Admittedly, the pro-Common Market right remained intensely unhappy, but their objections were clearly of peripheral importance since the N.E.C.'s statement, technically at least, allowed for membership provided the five conditions that had been laid down were achieved in negotiations. The majority of the Labour Party membership felt, as did their leader, that there was little likelihood of Britain joining the E.E.C., and that discussions of the advantages and disadvantages were and would continue to be largely immaterial since the Six were obviously not inclined to guarantee the much more moderate terms the Conservative Government was in the process of negotiating.[58] Wilson seems to have epitomized the official Labour Party line better than most. In the Commons debate on the European Economic Community on 8 November 1962, he reiterated that the Party would consider membership if, but only if, the five conditions were agreed to by the E.E.C. countries. He also stated that at present the Conservative Government was nowhere near securing the minimum on any of the issues and that the negotiations in Brussels were nothing but "one long record of surrender."[59] He wound up the debate by curtly informing the House that a change was indeed needed to ensure the social and economic advancement of the United Kingdom, but that membership in the Common Market was neither the desired nor the only alternative:

> We all of us know that the change that we need is a change that must come in this country, in our industry. . . . There is no more dangerous illusion than the thought that entry into Europe is going to be gimmick solving all our economic problems, giving us back our lost economic dynamic.
>
> All of us know that that dynamic will come only from our own efforts in industry and our policies in this House. If we make the changes we have nothing to fear whether inside or outside Europe, but, if we fail, the only choice is whether we are to be a backwater inside or outside Europe. Change we need and here we agree but the right hon Gentleman [Macmillan] must know that the first prerequisite is that a change must be made in the leadership given to this country.[60]

With the majority of the Labour Party membership opposed to British entry into the E.E.C. on anything but the most expedient terms for the United Kingdom, President De Gaulle's January veto came as neither a surprise nor a calamity.[61] They rejected completely the thesis put forward by the Conservatives that the Government was within an ace of a satisfactory agreement and would have achieved the prize had it not been for the intransigence of one Frenchman. Labour argued that the Government had not so much as scratched the surface of a successful agreement and that the entire episode constituted a national humiliation.[62] Ostensibly the Party still favoured entry into the Common Market, but it had to be on terms favourable to the British and preferably negotiated by a Labour Government. Wilson once again epitomized Labour thinking when he proposed an amendment to the motion tabled in the House of Commons on 11 February 1963, which expressed lack of confidence in the Conservative Government's ability to deal successfully with the political and economic situation arising from the breakdown in the Brussels negotiations.[63]

Surprisingly enough, in this instance the Party did not receive the support of the Trades Union Congress. In a statement issued on January 25, 1963, by the Economic Committee of the Congress, the unions indicated that while they regretted the difficulties that had arisen in the course of the Brussels negotiations, they were unanimously agreed that the Governments concerned should continue the discussions with a view to the United Kingdom becoming a full member of the European Economic Community. Their major concern was that consultation and co-operation between the various national unions should continue and to this end, they decided that discussions between the trade union centres would not be terminated.[64]

In light of the fact that such behaviour was not in keeping with previous TUC announcements, it is important to note the reasons which lay behind their comparatively favourable view of E.E.C. entry which had developed in the year prior to De Gaulle's veto. There appear to have been three: First, since the TUC was concerned with the welfare of its workers and since British industry was optimistic about the prospects inside the Community, for the moment at least it appeared opportune to support entry. Second, for the past few years the leadership of the TUC had become increasingly impressed with the economic and social developments within the E.E.C. countries. They were particularly impressed by the amount of effective planning which was carried out in the Community--something which was sorely lacking in the United Kingdom. Finally, the Secretariat of the TUC had provided the General Council with numerous analyses on the implications of the E.E.C. and as a consequence they had gained a wide perspective of Britain's future role on the Continent of Europe.[65]

Judged in terms of its effectiveness in influencing Government policy, Labour's opposition to the Common Market concept appears to have been remarkably successful. Where "Super-Mac" [Macmillan] and his associates equivocated, Caitskell and his colleagues spoke forthrightly and in the end their bold manner surmounted the Party's chronic difficulties with regard to factionalism and added significantly to the constraints upon the Conservative Government in the latter's dealings with the "Six."[66] Admittedly, the initial discordance within the Party detracted somewhat from its trenchancy, but the Party as a whole remained the focal point and the only significant formal vehicle for expression of opposition to the European Economic Community. For, to repeat a signal point, Labour had always viewed entry into the E.E.C. as a political gimmick, an attempt by the Macmillan administration to extricate itself from domestic difficulties.[67] As such, the move was to be opposed at all costs for it had not been proven that "European" solutions would at all be effective in solving uniquely British problems.

Notes to Chapter Four

[1] Labour Party, Report of the 61st Annual Conference (London: Transport House, 1962). Quoted in Conservative Party Research Department, Words for Eating (London: Conservative Central Office, 1969), p. 62.

[2] Hansard, Vol. 669 (December 13, 1962), col. 669.

[3] Gordon, pp. 143-144.

[4] Ibid., p. 143.

[5] Hansard, Vol. 615 (December 14, 1959), cols. 1151-1162; and Labour Party, Report of the 58th Annual Conference (1959), p. 7.

[6] Rothchild, p. 98.

[7] See for example Lieber, pp. 142-146 and 166-185; and Pfaltzgraff, pp. 22-115.

[8] Labour Party, European Unity, p. 5.

[9] Rothchild, p. 100; and Hugh Gaitskell, The Challenge of Co-existence (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), pp. 3-37.

[10] None of the twenty member organizations to the Congress opposed the resolution, but the Swiss and International Labour Bund delegates abstained from the vote. New York Times, 17 July 1955.

[11] Labour Party, Report of the 54th Annual Conference (1955), pp. 224-225.

[12] Christopher Layton, "Labour and Europe," Political Quarterly 33 (January-March 1962): 41.

[13] Hansard, Vol. 473 (March 28, 1950), cols. 320-321.

[14] Layton, p. 42.

[15] Of the twenty-nine people who sat on the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party, eleven were representatives of the TUC. For a more comprehensive account

of the TUC's association with the Labour Party, see Martin Harrison, "Trade Unions and the Labour Party," in Pressure Groups in Britain: a reader, eds. Richard Kimber and J. J. Richardson (London: Dent, 1974), pp. 69-85.

[16] George Woodcock, "The T.U.C. and Europe," The Spectator (February 21, 1958): 224.

[17] R. C. Beever, "Trade Union Re-Thinking," Journal of Common Market Studies 2 (November 1963): 144.

[18] Bow Group, Britain into Europe, p. 29.

[19] Labour Party Research Department, Twelve Wasted Years, p. 309.

[20] Hansard, Vol. 561 (November 26, 1956), col. 62.

[21] Ibid., cols. 62-70.

[22] For a summary of the TUC's requirements which focused primarily on the question of full employment, see "The Free Trade Area: A Challenge to British Industry," The World Today 14 (August 1958): 350.

[23] "Free Trade Reactions at Home," The Economist, October 13, 1962, p. 120.

[24] Trades Union Congress, Economic Association with Europe (London, November 1956). Cited in Trades Union Congress, Report 1957 (London, 1957), pp. 268-269.

[25] The Times, 14 October 1957.

[26] The Observer, 1 September 1957.

[27] The fact that the Free Trade Area project was viewed with less than enthusiastic concern is illustrated by the scant attention it received in the 55th, 56th, and 57th Annual Reports of the Labour Party.

[28] Hansard, Vol. 599 (February 12, 1959), col. 1481.

[29] Ibid., col. 1483. The Labour Party also stipulated that the European Free Trade Association was not to be used as a vehicle for recriminations and reprisals. The new Community should recognize its responsibilities to Europe

and aim at achieving over as wide an area as possible "full employment, economic expansion and social progress." Labour Party, Report of the 58th Annual Conference (1959), p. 71.

[30] Layton, p. 46.

[31] Beever, p. 142.

[32] Trades Union Congress, Report 1959 (London, 1959), p. 279.

[33] Trades Union Congress, Report 1960 (London, 1960), p. 262.

[34] *Hansard*, Vol. 615 (December 14, 1959), col. 1073.

[35] *Ibid.*, cols. 1073-1074.

[36] *Ibid.*, cols. 1161-1162.

[37] Trades Union Congress, *Industrial News*, No. 16 (August 28, 1959).

[38] Lieber, p. 88.

[39] The TUC's representatives were J. A. Birch and Harry Douglass. As substitutes the TUC elected Harold Collison and Frank Cousins. *Ibid*.

[40] As it turned out, the representation issue was somewhat of a dead letter, for the banking and finance representative failed to attend most meetings. The two union representatives therefore devoted most of their attention to improving the machinery available to the unions within the Consultative Committee. *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

[41] Pfaltzgraff, p. 38.

[42] *The Times*, 27 May 1960.

[43] Labour Party, *Report of the 60th Annual Conference* (1961), p. 225.

[44] *Hansard*, Vol. 627 (July 25, 1960), cols. 1115-1119.

[45] Noted in Lieber, p. 168.

[46] There were three influential leaders within the left-wing who favoured entry: Robert Edwards--head of the Chemical Workers; Water Padley--leader of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers; and Fenner Brockway--MP for Eton and Slough. The three right-wingers who opposed entry into the Common Market were: Patrick Gordon Walker--MP for Smethwick; Denis Healey--MP for Leeds East; and Douglas Jay--MP for Batterses North. Ibid., pp. 168-170.

[47] Within the Labour Party, pro-E.E.C. propaganda was usually disseminated by the Labour Common Market Committee, of which Roy Jenkins was an officer. The aim of the Committee was to harness support throughout the Party, but specifically within the Trade Unions, for membership in the Common Market. For a more detailed analysis of the Committee's work see Pfaltzgraff, pp. 85-87.

[48] It should be noted, however, that a resolution unconditionally opposing entry also failed to win approval at the Conference. Labour Party, Report of the 60th Annual Conference (1961).

[49] Ibid., p. 211.

[50] Labour Party, Report of the 61st Annual Conference (1962), p. 64.

[51] Gallup Political Index, No. 24 (December 1961), p. 8; and Nos. 28-29 (April-May 1962), p. 68.

[52] Sunday Times, 15 April 1962.

[53] Labour Party, Report of the 61st Annual Conference (1962), p. 245.

[54] Ibid., p. 246.

[55] Guardian, 5 October 1962.

[56] Labour Party, Report of the 61st Annual Conference (1962), p. 155.

[57] Ibid., pp. 154-165.

[58] In introducing the N.E.C.'s statement on the Common Market on October 3, Gaitskell received what the Chairman termed an "unparalleled ovation." Ibid.

[59] Harold Wilson, Purpose in Politics--Selected Speeches by Rt. Hon. Harold Wilson PC, OBE, MP (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), p. 118.

[60] Ibid., p. 130.

[61] At a press conference held in Paris on December 3, 1962, Gaitskell once again stated that "in our Labour's view there is no overriding necessity for Britain's entry into the Common Market." The Times, 4 December 1962.

[62] Wilson, Purpose in Politics, p. 147.

[63] "That this House has no confidence in the ability of Her Majesty's Government to formulate or to carry through a programme which would bring about the necessary changes in our policies of international trade and for economic and political co-operation and does not believe that it has the capacity to arouse in Great Britain the sense of urgency and national purpose so necessary to meet the situation created by the breakdown in the negotiations in Brussels." Labour Party, Report of the 62nd Annual Conference (1963), p. 68. When the Conservative motion which expressed confidence in the Government's ability to handle the situation was put before the House on February 12, 1963, the Labour Party was unanimous in rejecting it. Hansard, Vol. 671 (February 12, 1963), cols. 1259-1262.

[64] Beever, p. 151.

[65] Ibid., p. 152.

[66] The Guardian commented editorially on this point on October 4, 1962: "A European observer, knowing that Mr. Macmillan's Government is weak, might reasonably conclude that Britain is too deeply divided to be a reliable partner in Europe. . . . From a European point of view, at best, Mr. Macmillan may come to terms with the Six, with an election soon afterwards, and continue to govern with a narrow majority. But he will be bitterly opposed in Parliament and outside it, and Britain will be a turbulent bedfellow in Europe. At worst Mr. Macmillan may come to terms with the Six, lose an election soon afterwards, and then a Labour Government may repudiate the agreement. . . . So, a European may conclude, Britain is if not perfidious at least unreliable."

[67] R. H. S. Crossman, "British Labour Looks at Europe," Foreign Affairs 41 (July 1963): 735.

CHAPTER FIVE

Promotional Pressure Groups

The Liberal Party; The Times; and the Guardian

> . . . the behaviours that constitute the process of government cannot be adequately understood apart from the groups . . . which are operative at any one point in time.[1]

In modern British history, sectional pressure and promotional pressure groups have come to play an important role in the formation of official government policy.[2] From the anti-slavery and parliamentary reform movements in the late eighteenth century, to the Anti-Corn Law League of the nineteenth and the campaign for nuclear disarmament of the twentieth century, concerted and sustained action from certain sections of the community to obtain expressed ends through governmental decisions has been characteristic of the British political process. The nature of the relationship between the Government and a particular interest group has varied, from direct pressure on the politicians--"the infinite squeezability of politicians" as the Manchester Guardian so aptly phrased it[3]--through the de facto power of veto over a particular piece of legislation,[4] to persuasion through example.[5] Essentially, though, the process of Government remains one of interaction: The Government is constantly reminded of the legitimate needs and interests of the vocally critical community and is forced to respond, either covertly or openly and officially to these requirements. As an official of one promotional group put it, "Very much can be done which is in effect policy-making--what you try to do is to create an opinion among officials which is favourable to stretching the regulations."[6]

During the period 1955 to 1963, the association between informed public groups and the Government was the strongest it had been since the Second World War. The by-now familiar arguments concerning loss of sovereignty, fear of economic stagnation or strangulation, and the desire to maintain former imperial ties in the form of the Commonwealth connection account for this close relationship. As during the war years, many people in Great Britain now thought themselves to be in yet another life and death struggle to maintain their uniquely "British" way of life.[7] And yet it would be oversimplifying the case to claim that this insular climate led to the success of the anti-E.E.C. lobby.[8] In part this is true, as the course of Anglo-Continental negotiations for the eight year period reveals, yet, since the British governmental authorities themselves opposed participation in supra-national European ventures, those groups which remonstrated against membership mirrored rather than shaped the Government's policy.

How then do the groups either explicitly or guardedly in favour of British membership in the E.E.C. compare in terms of their ability to influence Government policy? The breakdown of the negotiations in January 1963 suggests that in the end they were totally unsuccessful. But once again concentration on the end result tends to obscure the total picture. The effort expended on the part of the Liberal Party, _The Times_, and the _Guardian_ to achieve an equitable solution to Anglo-European difficulties may well have proven fruitless, but at the same time it is difficult to conceive that Macmillan took the decision to seek entry into the E.E.C. without taking their arguments into account.[9] The measure, after all, deviated considerably from previous British behaviour and the context in which the actual terms of the application were both formulated and negotiated, approximated, in some cases rather closely, the pleadings of the pro-Common Market promotional pressure groups.

The Liberal Party

When the Messina powers extended to the British Government a formal invitation to participate in the discussions which they hoped would lead to a united Western Europe, the Liberals were the only political party in the United Kingdom to welcome the request with anything approaching enthusiasm. In fact, they adopted the Common Market solution even before the official invitation requesting British participation had been received. In the Liberal Manifesto of May 1955, the Party supported the proposed union in terms of "the establishment of a great free trade area in Europe."[10] The 1956 Liberal Assembly was equally convinced that the economic integration of Western Europe would assist in solving the economic and political problems facing both Britain and the Continent. Hence they reiterated that the United Kingdom should actively participate in the Common Market venture.[11]

Despite the exhortions of the Liberal Party that Britain should join the Common Market, the year immediately following the Messina initiative was a period of relative quiescence as far as Britain's relations with the newly emerging European Economic Community were concerned. Macmillan had ordered the withdrawal of the British representative from the Spaak Committee in November 1955, and until mid-summer of the following year the Conservative Government appeared indifferent to developments on the Continent. However, with the British suggestion in July 1956 that a Free Trade Area be established among all the O.E.E.C. countries, the Liberals could propound their belief that accommodation with the Six was the only answer to British economic and political difficulties. In an article which appeared in the February 1, 1957 edition of the Liberal News, the Party summarized its position of free trade:

> Liberals support the proposals that the United Kingdom should join THE FREE TRADE AREA--NOT THE CUSTOMS UNION. The more countries are committed to lowering tariffs while still free to fix the level of their tariffs against countries outside the Common Market, the more likely it is that tariffs all round will be low, so that trade will be increased.[12]

By comparison, the Liberal Party's pro-European stand in 1957 appeared considerably more qualified than it had been in 1955. The Party no longer advocated full-fledged British membership in the E.E.C., and the argument against entry corresponded to that put forth by the Conservative Government, viz., that Britain could not and would not accept a common external tariff. In the March 9, 1957 edition of The Times, Arthur Holt--Liberal MP for Bolton, West--intimated why the the Party had taken this stand. "We oppose the introduction of the Customs Union scheme," he stated, "since it cuts right across the principles of non-discrimination."[13] The implication was that the maintenance and development of the Commonwealth connection still figured highly in Liberal Party circles. That the Liberal Party balked at entry into the Customs Union, however, does not mean that they were unalterably opposed to the European concept of unification. The Party, after all, distinguished between the Customs Union--the "Six"--and a Common Market--a union of the Six and the countries comprising the proposed FTA--and if in the latter organization an arrangement could be reached whereby Britain would be free to abolish all her tariffs, then the Party would most certainly be in favour of British membership.

As the debate on Britain's association with the Continental efforts at unification intensified, Liberal support for British membership in the E.E.C. increased. In the February 1959 Commons debate on the European Free Trade Area, Mark Bonham-Carter--Liberal MP for Torrington--spoke on the necessity of joining the newly formed European Community and urged the Conservative Government to initiate conversations with the Commonwealth and the other O.E.E.C. countries with that end in mind. A "closer and more intimate political and economic association with Europe," he termed an "exciting prospect," and one made all the more natural in light of a common cultural and historical heritage.[14] The enthusiasm with which Bonham-Carter embraced the possibilities of economic and political planning within a Europe which included the United Kingdom soon extended to most of the Liberal Party organization. On July 24, 1960, an all-Party group of British MPs, including Joe Grimond--Liberal Party leader--and Holt, sponsored a statement which called on the Government to initiate negotiations with the E.E.C. with a view to full British membership.[15] Also made public on the same day was a party pamphlet entitled Britain Must Join. Written under the direction of party leader Joe Grimond, the pamphlet emphasized the arguments in favour of British entry and concluded that "No failure of British post-war policy has been so spectacular or so disastrous in its results as that of British policy in Western Europe."[16]

The publication of Grimond's pamphlet in July presaged the strong endorsement given to E.E.C. membership at the 1960 Liberal Party Assembly held at Eastbourne from September 29 to October 1. The rapid rate of economic expansion within the European Economic Community had already convinced most of the Party membership that entry was essential and when the executive resolution urging the Government "to take the lead in establishing common political institutions for Western Europe"[17] was presented on the first day of the conference, it was adopted by a majority of thirty-five to one.[18] Mark Bonham-Carter in introducing the executive motion dismissed objections such as that of Oliver Smedley--Party Vice-President--that to enter would be tantamount to discriminating against non-Western European countries.[19] He observed that unless Britain acted, and acted quickly, she would steadily fall behind the Six "not only in industrial and financial resources but also in political power and influence."[20]

By far the most clear-cut endorsement of British entry into the E.E.C. came at the 1962 Llandudno Party Conference. Spurred on by the Government's negotiations with the Six, and encouraged by E.E.C. membership supporters such as Bonham-Carter,[21] the Party passed a resolution which reaffirmed

> . . . its belief that Great Britain through joining the European Economic Community would be making a positive contribution to world peace and the unity of Western Europe and would be in a position to promote: the influence and prosperity of this country; the interests of the Commonwealth which will be advanced by the influential and prosperous Britain within the Community; the expansion of world trade, in particular through the wider reduction of tariff barriers; increased aid to and trade with developing countries; and the Atlantic partnership.

It further urged the Government ". . . to press its negotiations for membership in the EEC to a successful conclusion, and . . . take the initiative in planning worldwide food and commodity agreements."[22] Only a small minority of six members voted against the resolution.[23]

The effort by the Liberal Party to convince the Conservative Government of the benefits of E.E.C. membership ended on a gloomy note with De Gaulle's veto on

January 14, 1963. Dismayed and disappointed that their much sought-after objective once again appeared unattainable, the Party did not revert to isolationism nor did it lay the blame for the breakdown totally on De Gaulle. In this respect the Liberals were in advance of the Conservatives and Labourites. They perceived that De Gaulle's actions spelled merely the temporary internment of the concept of a united Europe, and that British entry sometime in the future was still a distinct possibility. "I hope that we shall make it crystal-clear," stressed Joe Grimond "that we are still interested in getting into Europe for the largest political reasons."[24]

The Liberal Party's influence must be seen as a balance between the firmness of their convictions and their small numbers. Under Grimond's leadership the Party achieved a good deal by the re-eduction of a number of its followers and assisted in paving the way for acceptance of the European ideal which led to the British initiative in 1961. It is arguable, of course, that such a stand was far too optimistic, for at the time it was not perfectly clear that membership in the E.E.C. would solve all of Britain's problems. A point which deserves equal stress, however, is the fact that the Liberals were the only political party in the United Kingdom to admit that total adherence to the Treaty of Rome was a solution which should be very seriously considered. They had at least overcome the anti-supranationalist bias which seems to have blinded the other two parties.

The Times and the Guardian

For the period under consideration in this study, both The Times and the Guardian helped to create an atmosphere in which the vision of a united Europe became both politically desirable and economically necessary to a large segment of the British public. Their conversion to the European cause--albeit with some reservations--dates back to the Messina initiative of June 1955, and their advocacy of British accommodation with the E.E.C. continued until the collapse of the negotiations in January 1963.

From the onset of the E.E.C. debate, The Times of London was considerably more cautious in its acceptance of the European ideal than was the Guardian. It was hesitant in taking a stand one way or the other with regard to Foreign Minister Beyen's invitation in June 1955, and then oversimplified the British quandry by arguing that present economic relations with the Commonwealth, as opposed to future prospects in Europe, should be the yardstick by which Britain measured the desirability of participation. Typical of its qualified acceptance of the European ideal was an article which appeared in the July 21, 1955, edition. Written during the height of the Anglo-Dutch discussions, the article began with the observation that participation in the proposed union was "clearly no simple matter of foreign policy" in as much as "it would concern the whole structure of the British economy." It continued to argue, however, that British participation in the Spaak Committee was acceptable provided no prior commitment was made:

> Clearly there would be much to be gained, and little to be lost, by British participation in the committee work. It is also clear that those Powers are most anxious to hear Britain's views and to have Britain's help in their discussions, and this is no mean compliment.[25]

As the controversy over association with Europe progressed through the FTA and EFTA stages, The Times became increasingly disposed to accept the Government's, as opposed to the European interpretation of co-operation, that is to say, inter-governmental rather than supranational. The paper recognized the benefits which would accrue to the Six as a result of the Treaty of Rome, but at the same time it regarded the British proposals as the most effective means of ensuring the economic and political growth of Western Europe. It was of the opinion that the repercussions of Britain's entry into an obviously discriminatory E.E.C. would go far beyond trade agreements and eventually affect the economic strength of Britain and the Continent as a whole. Since the West was ultimately dependent on just such strength for its security, it only stood to reason that the United Kingdom not join the Community.[26]

Despite the growing candour of The Times in support of the intergovernmental arguments from 1958 to 1960, the paper never advised that the door to accommodation with the Six be shut permanently. The prospect of a link between the FTA and the Common Market, it conceded, was not a promising one, but it also argued that there was room on both sides for a more sympathetic climate of opinion. A leading article which appeared in mid-November 1959, was characteristic of the technique then used by the paper to present both arguments. After outlining briefly the prospects for closer political links among the six E.E.C. countries, the article concluded that

> At the same time they [the political links] could easily harden the divisions in Europe, not only between East and West and between the two parts of Germany but between the Six and the Outer Seven of the Free Trade Area. So far little is known about the plans, probably because they are themselves still sketchy and tentative, and the Six have different views of them. But even now the talk about them should be a spur to efforts at close association between Britain and the Community.[27]

With Macmillan's decision in July 1961 to seek entry into the European Economic Community, The Times' coverage of the Common Market debate underwent a significant transformation. The vague acceptance of the European ideal which had characterized the reporting and the editorials of the paper for the past six years, was replaced with a much broader and frequently emotional campaign in favour of British membership in the Community. "Application Form," the title of the first leading article to appear after Macmillan's announcement, was indicative of the change. After congratulating the Prime Minister on his contention that it was better to make application for full membership under Article 237, rather than seek association under Article 238, the editorial staff remarked that neither the Commonwealth countries nor those compromising the European Free Trade Association should have the power of absolute veto over the question of British entry. "Clearly, Britain's pledges have to be honoured," they argued, but "it would be wise for the Government not to be too categoric at this stage. They must enter negotiations with the greatest possible strength."[28] As a self-professed exponent for British entry into the E.E.C., The Times was equally keen on publishing the arguments of influential groups and individuals who held the same views. In most cases the articles printed voiced expectations of economic gain,[29] greater industrial and agricultural efficiency,[30] and as a result of these, a new and improved stature for Great Britain as a world power. The declining importance of the Commonwealth connection was also given considerable emphasis in the columns of the paper, the protagonists of British entry usually reminding the readers that if Britain persisted in holding on to the memories of the past, the future would hold nothing but economic and political decline.[31]

Failure in October 1962 to obtain transitional arrangements for readjusting British agriculture to the Community system, however, led to a perceptible cooling in The Times' support for E.E.C. membership. Reminiscent of its pre-1961 stand, the paper continued to advocate entry but emphasized that such a course of action was not foregone. "What is important now," ran the leading article on October 27, "is that the Six should not assume, from the enthusiasm shown at the Conservative Party Conference, that Britain is prepared to go in at any price."[32] More to the point was an editorial which appeared on October 30, 1962. Incensed over the deadlock in the negotiations the editors were severely critical of the Conservative leaders for having failed to adequately qualify their European enthusiasm. The desire to enter Europe was fine, they argued, but what was to be done in the event that acceptable terms could not be found? In a moment of candour rare for The Times, the editors even went so far as to concede that "Mr. Gaitskell's seemingly pedestrian insistence on the importance of the actual terms of entry and his doubts about the aspirations of some of the Six look very much to the point."[33]

From October 1962 until January 1963, the attitude of The Times toward the E.E.C. controversy changed very little. The editorials throughout this period impressed upon the British public the importance of honouring the nation's pledges to the Commonwealth and the EFTA,[34] and the necessity of keeping the door open to accommodation with the Six.[35] The editors also dismissed as ludicrous the suggestion that Britain withdraw from the negotiations, arguing that it would only disarm and discourage all those on the Continent who desired British membership.[36] To De Gaulle's veto of British entry, the paper reacted as did most: it contended that the act expressed the will of one man and that there was nothing the British could do to alter the situation.[37] Not unexpectedly, the editorial staff qualified their condemnation by once again pointing out that Britain could not turn her back on Europe, nor abandon forever the idea of joining the Common Market. Such action, it was argued, would only demonstrate the parochial nature of the British economic and political system and impede what was now the most important task of all, to put her own house in order in the absence of the Common Market alternative.[38]

If not prepared to advocate full membership in a "federal" Europe in June of 1955, the Guardian, nevertheless, was far more receptive to the Common Market concept than was The Times. The former's editorial writers embraced the Messina initiative as the most important step toward European unification after the collapse of the European Defence Community, and dismissed the contention that it was a "slow motion" approach to union doomed to innumerable delays.[39] When the Treaty of Rome was signed in March 1957, the same tone of approval continued. "In all European countries," ran the leading article on March 25, "many people will salute the signing of the treaties as a milestone in the history of the West. . . ."[40] That the Guardian held a favourable view of the E.E.C., however, does not mean that it disregarded or failed to recognize the difficulties that the Six would now face. The editorials always contained the qualifier that the treaties signed in Rome would not change the face of the continent overnight and that the real work of harmonization still lay ahead.

Once it became clear that the Government had no intention of joining the Common Market, the Guardian channeled its energies in support of the Free Trade Area and the European Free Trade Association proposals. For a time it too believed that the intergovernmental approach provided the answers to Britain's difficulties and for the most part its editorials during the period 1958 to 1960 paralleled rather closely those which appeared in The Times. What remained distinguishable about the former however, was its undaunted effort to remind the public of the detrimental effects which could ensue if the rival plans for achieving closer European economic unity were not in some way harmonized. Typical of its concern was an editorial which appeared on November 21, 1959. After pointing out that the trade benefits from the EFTA would be extremely modest in comparison with those that could have accrued from either the Free Trade Area or British participation in the E.E.C., the editors concluded that

> Unfortunately it is still far from clear whether the formation of the European Free Trade Association will help or hinder the rest of Europe to come to terms with the Six. . . . . This does not mean that we ought not to have joined with them in this association: it does suggest the urgency of seeking new negotiations with the Six before economic and institutional divisions become too rigid.[41]

The sense of optimism that the Guardian had derived from the thought of British entry into the Common Market reached its zenith in August 1961. In response to the campaign launched by the Conservative administration, the strategy of the paper was to present the bid for E.E.C. membership as the right decision, but at the same time to argue that the route chosen would not lead to the desired end. Editorials included repeated references to such terms as a shivering Government and half-hearted approaches to

Europe, and invariably concluded with the warning that to slap your prospective partners in the face by making British membership contingent on formal agreement to X number of concessions was a poor way to start the negotiations.[42] According to this viewpoint, moreover, the Europeans were perfectly justified in suspecting that the British were basically unsure as to what they wanted and that concessions would in no way improve the likelihood of their entering the Community. "Why jeopardize the progress of the Common Market by introducing Britain, with all the difficulties and uncertainties she brings?"[43]

Accommodation to Government policy on the part of the Guardian, however, did come in October 1962 when British economic interests, particularly agricultural interests, clashed with those of the E.E.C. Of the editorials written during this period, most displayed a distinct preference for establishing limits beyond which Britain would make no concessions to the Six, some going so far as to state that "The Labour Party's Common Market statement, as eventually drafted, is on the whole fair and sensible. . . ."[44] The paper tried to emphasize that it was wrong for the United Kingdom to enter the E.E.C. on terms that could conceivably undermine the nation's prosperity during the transitional period, for then Britain would be only a weak partner in Europe and one without influence. "The vision which inspired Britain's approach to Europe," the paper contended "was of prosperity and peace--prosperity through access to the large market, and peace through leadership of a new

Great Power."[45] A damaged and feeble country could attain neither of these objectives.

If, after October 1962, there remained any determination on the part of the Guardian to defend the idea that Britain should adhere to the Treaty of Rome in its present form, it quickly dissipated after De Gaulle's veto in January 1963. The paper depicted the General as the villain in the episode and argued that his conception of Europe was exclusive, protectionist and a perversion of the European ideal.[46] In keeping with their contention that to enter Europe was ultimately the right objective, however, they tempered their criticism by reiterating that Britain should not close the door to Europe permanently. "It would be absurd," argued the paper on January 24, 1963, "for opinion in this country to allow itself to be so carried away by indignation against France that it ceases to care about the terms on which membership can be got."[47]

Despite the existence of considerable dispute as to the importance of the press in foreign policy formulation, it seems reasonable to assume that The Times and the Guardian were partially responsible for what little European sentiment the powers that be in London exhibited from 1955 to 1963. Admittedly, the influence was mostly of an indirect nature, but their assistance in the creation of a general climate of opinion which favoured an accommodation with Europe should not be underestimated. Government, after all, depends on public support for the successful implementation of its policies, and it is certainly conceivable that had The Times and the Guardian been unalterably opposed to the European ideal, the Conservative Government's European initiatives would have been far more limited.

Notes to Chapter Five

[1] David Truman, The Governmental Process--Political Interests and Public Opinion (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1951), p. 25.

[2] Sectional pressure groups purport to defend the interests of only certain segments of society, while promotional pressure groups seek to promote causes arising from a given set of attitudes. Allen Potter, Organized Groups in British National Politics (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), p. 25. The present chapter is entitled "Promotional Pressure Groups" precisely because of this distinction. The groups chosen for consideration sought to persuade the Government to join in the European attempts at unification because they thought such a move would benefit the nation as a whole.

[3] Guardian, 11 December 1953.

[4] For example, S. E. Finer argues that while organized capital and labour in Great Britain do not dictate official government policy, their position in the economy makes their co-operation essential. Hence, "They do not direct, but they may veto." Anonymous Empire--A Study of the Lobby in Great Britain (London: Pall Mall Press, 1958), p. 27.

[5] The various charitable and social service organizations are examples of where "exemplary" behaviour can result in considerable Government assistance. For further discussion, see Potter, pp. 37-39.

[6] Quoted in Samuel H. Beer, "Pressure Groups and Parties in Britain," The American Political Science Review 50 (March 1956): 7.

[7] Edmund Wilson remarked on the British penchant for remaining an island unto themselves in his work Europe Without Baedeker--Sketches, Among the Ruins of Italy, Greece and England (London: Secker and Warbury, 1948), p. 14. Although citation depicts Britain in the late 1940s, it is an equally valid description of British behaviour for the period 1955 to 1963. "Yet the British, though they shudder at the notion of any other power's dominating Europe, shrink also from the idea of co-operating, for purposes of international control, with the other great Western countries. They used to reproach us, with reason, for creating the League of Nations and then refusing to take our place in it, but, during my visit, I have got the impression that the

average educated Englishman is still thinking of the future of the world in terms of old-fashioned balance-of-power, for which nations are irredecible units that can associate in pacts and alliances like the combinations of molecules in chemistry but cannot cohere to produce a new structure by a process of crystallization."

[8] The prominent organizations opposed to entry were: The Anti-Common Market League; the Forward Britain Movement; Britain and the Common Market; Keep Britain Out Campaign; The True Tories; and Anti-Common Market Union. Those organizations in favour of British membership included: The Common Market Campaign; The Labour Common Market Committee; U.K. Council of the European Movement; and Federal Trust for Education and Research. For a more detailed account of these groups, see Lieber, pp. 208-218.

[9] For those interested in Public Opinion and the E.E.C., see the Appendix. Although difficult to prove, it is reasonable to assume, that the vocally critical sections of the community would have more influence on Government decisions than would the public in general. The link between both groups and the Government remains, of course, implicit, but the fact that the former are well organized and usually have definite objectives in mind, suggests that the Government would be more aware of their needs as, opposed to those of the public in general. The most that can be said for public sentiment is that it sets some general limits beyond which Macmillan would presumably not venture, i.e., refuse to associate with the European countries on an intergovernmental level. For further information, the following articles can also be consulted: Mark Abrams, "British Elite Attitudes and the European Common Market," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 29 (Summer 1965): 236-246; Henry Durant, "Public Opinion and the EEC," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 6 (March 1968): 231-249; "British Attitudes to the EEC 1960-63." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 5 (September 1966): 49-61; Jacques-René Rabier, "The European ideal and national public opinion," *Government and Opposition* 2 (April-July 1967): 443-454; and Kenneth Younger, "Public Opinion and British Foreign Policy," *International Affairs* 40 (January 1964): 22-33.

[10] *The Times*, 6 May 1955.

[11] Jorgen Scott Rasmussen, *The Liberal Party--A Study of Retrenchment and Revival* (London: Constable, 1965), p. 138.

[12] Quoted in Roy Douglas, *The History of the Liberal Party 1895-1970* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1971), p. 273.

[13] *Guardian*, 9 March 1957.

[14] *Hansard*, Vol. 599 (February 12, 1959), cols. 1430-1435.

[15] *The Times,* 25 July 1960.

[16] Quoted in Alan Watkins, *The Liberal Dilemma* (London: MacGribbon and Kee, 1966), p. 110.

[17] Labour Party Research Department, *Twelve Wasted Years*, p. 446.

[18] *Guardian*, 30 September 1960.

[19] *Ibid*.

[20] *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, Vol. 12 (1959-60), p. 17831.

[21] In an essay published in May 1962, Bonham-Carter reiterated the oftheard arguments in favour of entry: "We are living in an age," he argued, "when larger economic and political units are almost inevitable, and where those who refuse to combine because they wish to control their own destinies will find their fate decided without consultation, and generally to their disadvantage, by those who have joined." Mark Bonham-Carter, "Liberals the Political Future," in *Radical Alternative--Studies in Liberalism by the Oxford Liberal Group*, ed. George Watson (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1962), p. 28.

[22] *Guardian*, 20 September 1962.

[23] *Guardian*, 21 September 1962.

[24] *Guardian*, 22 January 1963.

[25] *The Times*, 21 June 1955.

[26] *The Times*, 18 November 1958.

[27] *The Times*, 17 November 1959.

[28] *The Times*, 1 August 1961.

[29] See for example, *The Times*, 31 October 1961; *The Times*, 8 October 1962; and *The Times*, 22 October 1962.

[30] See for example, *The Times*, 23 August 1961; *The Times*, 11 October 1961; and *The Times*, 27 October 1962.

[31] See for example, The Times, 2 August 1961; and The Times, 5 August 1961.

[32] The Times, 27 October 1962.

[33] The Times, 30 October 1962.

[34] The Times, 2 January 1963.

[35] The Times, 16 January 1963.

[36] Ibid.

[37] The Times, 30 January 1963.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Guardian, 6 June 1955.

[40] Guardian, 25 March 1957.

[41] Guardian, 21 November 1959.

[42] Guardian, 1 August 1961; Guardian, 3 August 1961; and Guardian, 5 August 1961.

[43] Guardian, 9 October 1961.

[44] Guardian, 1 October 1962.

[45] Guardian, 15 October 1962.

[46] Guardian, 18 January 1963. The strongest editorial directed against De Gaulle appeared in the 23 January 1963 edition. "A strong and vigorous France could be a valued leader of Europe. The anxiety is lest this Europe is to be a closed community, looking in on itself and its own interests alone. In such a Europe lie the seeds of a future war. Not only will the West as a whole be weakened by the division and withering of the Atlantic Alliance, but at the same time Western Europe's exclusiveness may bring it into conflict instead of co-operation with groups in Africa, Asia, and perhaps Eastern Europe. This is one failing of the Gaullist concept; another is the illusion that Western Europe independently can ever catch up in the nuclear arms race."

[47] Guardian, 24 January 1963.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

In the introduction to this study, the question was posed "why did the British not join the Common Market during its formative years 1955 to 1963?" Is the standard British reply that General De Gaulle was the one and only bar to entry an adequate explanation? Is the contention that Great Britain was not European and hence could not be expected to participate in a predominantly Continental venture equally valid? Or did the British simply underestimate the revival power of Western Europe and assume that Britain could make it on her own, or at best with a little assistance from her trusted friends--the Commonwealth and the United States?

For the period that has been reviewed here, the evidence suggests that there is a certain grain of truth in all of the above theses. But other factors, factors which were an outgrowth of Britain's unique war-time experience and her involvement with European integrative ventures immediately following the Second World War, also came into the picture. It is these, taken in conjunction with many of the much oversimplified but usually accepted interpretations, that provide the answer to the question of Britain's hesitancy in entering into the European Economic Community.

In relative terms, the reassessment of traditional foreign policy which resulted from the holocaust of the

Second World War, was considerably less intense in the United Kingdom than on the Continent. The war, while it had had catastrophic effects on the British economy, had not been psychologically shattering and as a result the Government and the public alike did not see any immediate need for a rearrangement of their political and economic system. Concomitant with the British misjudgment of the strength of the post-war drive toward European unification, was their sincere belief that the Commonwealth and the Anglo-American special relationship were valuable assets, valuable not only for narrow British interests, but also for the peace and prosperity of the free world. Once again, however, these assumptions were the product of the war. As far as the British were concerned it was American and Commonwealth succour which had allowed them to withstand the tempests of war. European assistance had been of little or no value and the Soviet Union's contribution had to be qualified in light of the country's late entry into the war.

The policies of the Conservative administration from 1955 to 1963 were basically an extension of those followed in the previous ten years. The slow-moving, cautious approach to novel political experiments which from 1945 to 1955 had been exemplified in the pronounced preference for an intergovernmental as opposed to a federal approach to European integration, was continued with the Government proposing the Free Trade Area and the European Free Trade Association as alternatives to the supranational European

Economic Community. The 1961 application for full membership in the E.E.C., presupposed a certain reappraisal of British foreign policy, but the course of the negotiations seems to indicate that the powers that be in London had still not come to embrace fully the concept of a new Europe, a concept which necessitated the breaking of old allegiances and the forming of new ones. Despite the repeated protestations of "Super-Mac" and his associates to the effect that Britain should enter the Common Market, the limitations they placed on membership indicated that as of yet the anticipated benefits did not outweigh the anticipated drawbacks.

The Labour Party was even more consistent in following the guidelines set down from 1945 to 1955. In part, this was due to the fact that a Labour administration had guided British policy for the six years immediately following the war, but equally important was their firm belief that a strictly European affiliation would detract from rather than enhance Britain's economic and political position relative to the rest of the world. The Commonwealth of Nations was particularly important in this respect. In addition to augmenting Britain's power and prestige, the Labour Party felt a special obligation to the organization. They regarded it as their own creation, and the conditions they laid down for British entry into the E.E.C. reflected a concern for its preservation. The vociferous opposition to Common Market entry on the part of the Labour Party was also a reflection of the fact that the "European" question became a matter of dispute between the British political parties. Had the Conservatives been even less concerned with joining the European Community, Labour's resistance would probably have diminished in direct proportion.

To judge from the ultimate failure of the E.E.C. negotiations, the pro-Common Market promotional pressure groups were severely limited in their ability to influence Government policy. And yet, when the decision to seek entry had been taken in 1961, their demands did play a role in the formulation of the Government's negotiating position vis-á-vis the Common Market. How is one to explain the inconsistency? The answer lies in the fact that within both the Government and the majority of the pro-E.E.C. groups--the exception being the Liberal Party--Common Market entry was usually treated as an economic issue. As long as the economic benefits of entry appeared to outweigh the disadvantages, the Government was willing to align with their position. However, as it became increasingly clear in the months following July 1961 that Britain did not have sufficient authority to demand and win favourable terms of entry, and that therefore these economic benefits could not be guaranteed, the pro-E.E.C. groups did not press their point as strongly. The case for entry was still there, but for all intents and purposes, the Government could disregard it.

In the final analysis, Britain's bid to join the European Economic Community was unsuccessful because the economic as well as the political costs of entry were thought to be more than the benefits which would likely accrue. De Gaulle's veto admittedly brought the negotiations to an official end, but the conditions which Britain had laid down for entry had settled the outcome of the exchange long before 14 January 1963. It remains an open question, of course, as to whether or not Britain had made the correct move. In considering the subsequent history of Europe, including Great Britain, however, it seems clear that had she tried harder from 1955 to 1963 to accommodate herself to the European ideal, she would have been more successful in creating the kind of Europe she later wanted.

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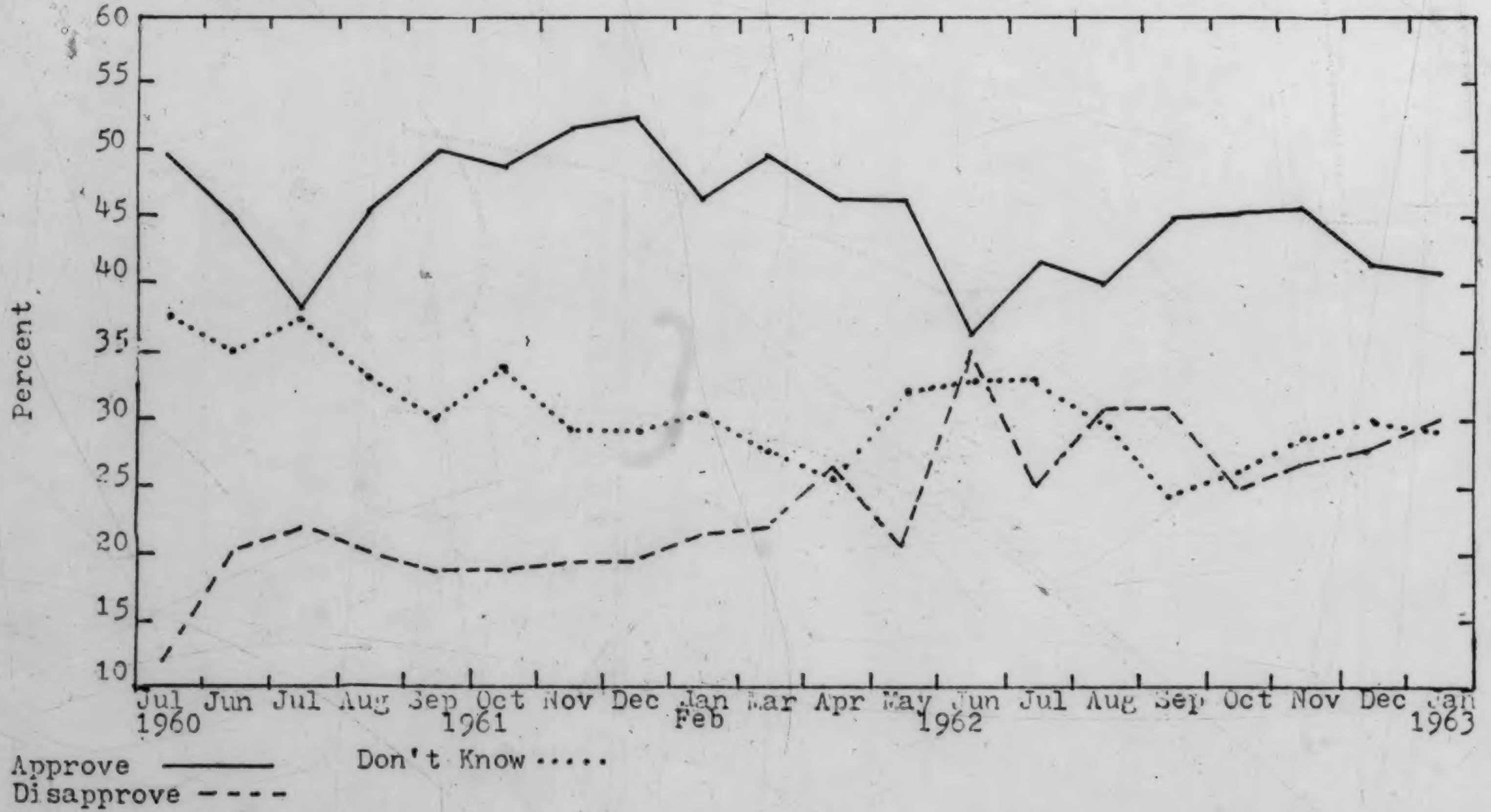
Appendix I. Pubic Opinion and the E.E.C.

Question: If the British Government were to decide that Britain's interest would best be served by joining the European Common Market, would you approve or disapprove?



Source: "British Attitudes to the EEC 1960-63," Journal of Common Market Studies 5 (September 1966): 49-50.